

ACE

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Pink Section Inside

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SUDDENLY YOU'RE EVERY MOVE IS
MONITORED BY WOULD-BE ASSASSINS,
YOU DISCOVER THE SURREAL TRUTH -

YOU'RE NOT YOU -

YOU'RE M

MARS TO DISCOVER
YOUR MISSION IS NOW
STOP ACTION, STRANGE
VEHICLES AND A STARTLING
CAPTURED IN SUPERBLY
ANDA GAME PLAY THAT

SUCCESS OF THE

OP MOVIE



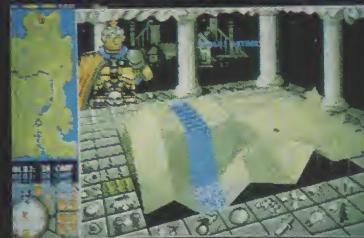
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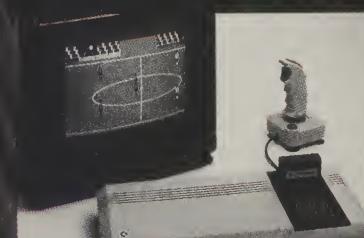
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"I was hot for aliens..."

Jean Genet, French author
(misinterpreted by Emmanuel Strikneen)



Powermonger: Bullfrog, developers of *Populous*, have done it again - and how! See pages 42/43



Fast and present: the C64 console showing, *gasp*, International Soccer and featuring on our main menu: games wallchart - free with this issue!



Silent Service II - with a great pedigree, could this be the ultimate sub sim? Check out page 81



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reviews

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That's our new Pink section, redesigned and refurbished to give you the industry's most comprehensive reference section for gamesplayers. In addition to the hardware and software listings, we've introduced monthly columns for nine major computer and console formats, so if you own an ST, Amiga, PC, Spectrum, Amstrad, C64, Megadrive, Sega Master, or Gameboy you can turn to the Pinks each month for machine specific news and gossip. Adventure fans will find a new regular tips section hosted by Pat Winstanley, and retailer Dale Bradford begins a regular Pink Piece that gives you the industry viewpoint from another angle. Not only that, but you still get the indispensable ACE Diary, giving you monthly run-downs on release dates and events; the ACE Deals section with news of freebies just round the corner, and of course the ACE Charts and Stockmarket, keeping you up to date with the hottest games around.





Captive - combining *Dungeon Master* style graphics with excellent gameplay. ACE rated on pages 48/49

READY TO SHRED

ACE turns Turtle this month, but we haven't neglected those of you with a hunger for heavyweight gaming. *Wildfire*, the extraordinary sequel to *Midwinter*; *Simulcra*, a stunningly playable *Virus* derivative from Microstyle; and *Captive*, an excellent combination of *Dungeon Master* graphics, RPG, and arcade action are just a few of the treats in this issue. We've also checked out the emerging CDTV software scene and highlighted a couple of development projects - the first wave of what promises to become a flood over the next six months. Plus news from Japan, *Gameboy Paperboy* and, when you've finished, a chance to relax in the Living Room of the Future in our CES preview feature.

Some of the original artwork for *Xiphos* (page 44), notable for the best graphics ever in a space trading/combat scenario

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SHRED HOT!

First glimpses of UK Turtles on page 26, plus details on how you could grab £100 worth of Turtle goodies



OCTOBER 1990



Wildfire - the sequel to the excellent *Midwinter* - is currently under development at Maelstrom. See pp 17-19

MIDWINTER THAWS OUT!

Roving ACE reporter, Rik Haynes, takes an epic journey from Euston Station this month... in search for the sequel to *Midwinter*. Read how Mike 'Lords of Midnight' Singleton and Maelstrom Games are creating the megagame of 1990. Discover the secrets of fractal graphics and human generation. "There are 40-50 major missions in *Wildfire*, each has the scope of *Midwinter*," boasts Singleton. Go on baby, light your *Wildfire*. It all starts on page 17

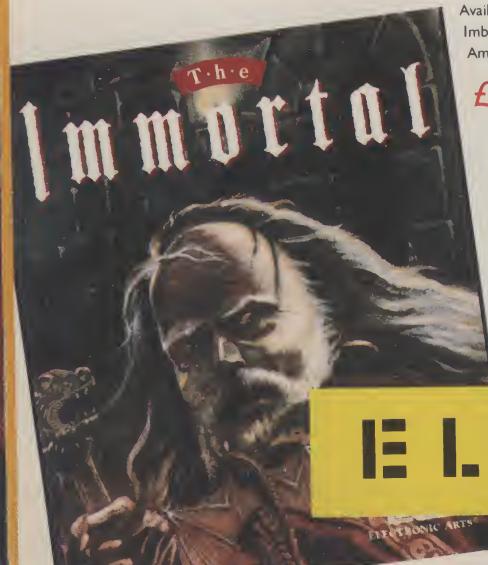
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It's a sad fact of life that only the fortunate few will ever get to experience Will Harvey's masterwork - The Immortal.

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SEGA GAMEGEAR colour handheld console (pic supplied by ASCII Corporation).

GOING CONSOLE CRAZY

Rik Haynes investigates the latest consoles to hit the circuit

Are you ready to become a console cowboy? Are consoles really taking over? ACE looks at the leading consoles on the market and asks the UK's top software houses for their opinions and plans...

C64 Games System (£99.99), console version of the C64, supplied with four-game compilation cartridge: *Klax* (Domark), *Fiendish Freddy* (Mindscape), *Flimbo's Quest* (System Three) and *International Soccer* (Commodore). Commodore believes there will be at least 100 C64 cartridges available before Christmas. Peter Bilotta, Managing Director of Mirrorsoft, states, "Mirrorsoft want to make sure we produce the right type of game for each console". Mark Strachan, joint Managing Director of Domark, says: "Domark is producing five titles on the C64 console including *Vindicators* and *Cyberball*. For the GX4000 we'll have *Klax* and *Escape from the Planet of the Robot Monsters* – plus three other games. All ten titles will hopefully be available for Christmas". Strachan adds, "Consoles will be much bigger this year, but the Spectrum and C64 micros aren't blown out of the water yet". Other companies producing C64 cartridges include Mindscape and Microprose. Peter Jones of Microprose says, "We'll probably produce classic games like *Silent Service* and *Gunship* – and new products such as *Rick Dangerous II*, *Betrayal* and *International Soccer Challenge*". US Gold is considering the following C64 carts: *California Games*, *Infiltrator*, *Impossible Mission II*, *Leaderboard* and *Gauntlet II*. But Geoff Brown, Managing Director of US Gold, states: "We'll still support C64 cassette and disk users".

Amstrad GX4000 (£99.99), console version of the CPC micro with enhanced audio-visual hardware and *Burning Rubber* games cartridge (see pages 119-120 for further details). Ocean will be converting *Robocop II*, *Batman - The Movie*, *Plotting*, *Operation Thunderbolt*, *Chase HQ* and *Shadow Warriors*. Unfortunately, Ocean was unavailable for comment as ACE went to press. Other

GX4000 games include: *Kick Off II* (Anco), *Crazy Cars 2* (Titus) and *Pro Tennis Tour* (Ubisoft). Electronic Arts currently has no plans to develop titles on either the GX4000 or C64 console because they are "too European". Geoff Brown disagrees, "I want the Amstrad console to be successful because it's British. US Gold will be releasing *Epyx Worlds of Sport* and *Strider II* on the GX4000".

Nintendo Super Famicom (£TBA). ACE has heard this new 16-bit console will be launched in Japan during November at a price of 25000yen (£100). It apparently features a customised 16-bit central processor and incorporates a DMA circuit to speedup graphics and sound functions. The clock can be automatically switched to 1.79MHz, 2.68MHz or 3.58MHz. The CPU can access up to 12Mb of memory. The basic unit comes with 1278K RAM and 64K V-RAM. Eight sounds can be played at the same time using its 16-bit PCM stereo sampler. A 32KHz sampling option is also available. It is reported that Nintendo will have thirty titles available at launch, including *Populous* (Electronic Arts), *Dungeon Master* (FTL) and *Sim City* (Maxis). No European release date has been set for the Super Famicom.

Sega Gamegear (£TBA), a colour handheld console with similar technology to the Sega Master System but can't use its games cartridges. It features Z80A at 3.58MHz, 3.2" screen with resolution of 160x146, displays 32 colours out of a palette of 4096, 8K RAM, 16K V-RAM, three tone PSG sound and one noise channel. Gamegear has a built-in speaker and

3.5mm headphone jack. It is powered by six AA batteries. Up to eight players can link-up for multi-player games. Gamegear will supposedly cost 19800yen (£79). A tuner to turn the Gamegear into a TV costs 12800yen (£51). Sega is using several Japanese software houses to develop and transfer games such as Japan Computer System, Nihon Tele-Net, Micro Cabin, Wolf Team, Kaneko Works, Sigma Trade,



NINTENDO SUPER FAMICOM (pic courtesy of ASCII Corporation).

System Soft and Namuko. The games to be developed and transferred include: *Space Harrier*, *Out Run*, *Wonderboy*, *Monaco GP* and *Future Zone III*. Gamegear cartridge prices will be in the region of 3500yen (£14). Rumours suggest Origin's *Ultima* will also be released. It is believed Gamegear will be launched in Europe sometime in the first half of '91 – although Nick Alexander, the Managing Director of Virgin/Mastertronic (UK distributor of the Sega Master and Megadrive), thinks a British Gamegear price of between £100-£150 more likely.

Sega Megadrive (£189.99) to be launched in September with 20 games titles officially available over here before Christmas, including *Space Harrier II*, *Ghouls 'n' Ghosts* and *Golden Axe*. Cart prices range from £29.99-£39.99. The Powerbase adapter (£39.99) lets you plug-in and play Master System games. New Megadrive games include *Populous* (Electronic Arts), *Batman - The Movie* (Sunsoft) and *Super Monaco GP*. An add-on CD-ROM drive for the Megadrive has been delayed until Spring 1991 – for an expected price of 40000yen (£160).

Nintendo Gameboy (£69.99), handheld console comes with *Tetris* games cartridge. A wealth of good quality Gameboy games are already available, including *Batman - The Movie* (Sunsoft), *Double Dragon* (Technos), *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (Konami), *Paperboy* (Mindscape) and *Super Mario Land*. Geoff Heath, Managing Director of Mindscape UK, says, "Mindscape supports Nintendo because of the huge American and Japanese markets. We have *Days of Thunder* and *Gauntlet II* coming out on Gameboy later this year."

Sega Master System (£79.99). US Gold is supporting the Master this Christmas with *Gauntlet*, *Impossible Mission*, *Paperboy* and *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*. Other USG games like *Leaderboard* and *Heroes of the Lance* will be converted over to the Master next year.

Nintendo Entertainment System (£79.99), bundled with *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (Konami) cartridge game for a 'limited period' from September. Rumours suggest the Turtles cart and price will be dropped when initial stocks shell-out.

Lynx (£179.99), software is very scarce, Tengen is the only software developer really supporting the Lynx. Conversions of *Paperboy*, *Klax* and *Vindicators* are on their way before Christmas.

Which console should you buy? As Geoff Brown puts it, "There are no winners or losers at the moment". This feeling is shared by most of the other software house bosses I spoke to. "We want the micro and console to live happily together," says Peter Bilotta. If it's any help to you, my personal fave console decks are currently the Sega Megadrive and Nintendo Gameboy. These, along with the Commodore C64 Games System and Amstrad GX4000 video games consoles will be launched at CES (Earl's Court, 15-16 September, 10am-6pm). See page 131 for the ACE opinion on this dilemma.

GAMEBOY GETS E-MOTIONAL

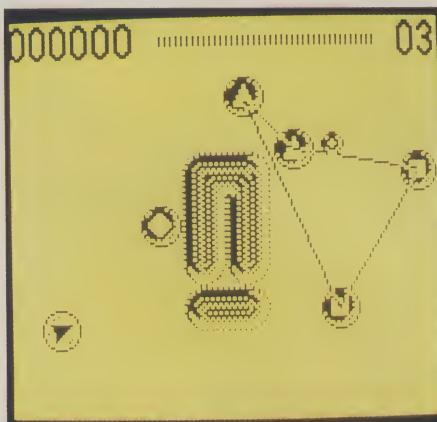
"Are you smart? Do you have quick reflexes? Are you good enough for this game?" US Gold's 890-Rated arcade style puzzle game *E-Motion* has been converted over to the Gameboy.

Released by Accolade and retitled to *The Game Of Harmony*, this original and addictive title is "an arcade game for the new age in which players must use a combination of strategy, concentration and quick reflexes".

Harmony gameplay is simple but effective. "You're a single spinning sphere facing a series of 50 fantastic computer generated puzzles. Your goal? Knock similar balls together and

make them disappear. Sounds simple? It's not. Each puzzle is different and requires a different strategy. Hit the wrong balls together and they multiply. If you don't clear the screen in time, the whole thing explodes. Beat this baby and you can call yourself good. Until then, you're just a pretender."

Could this be the start of synergy software? "Strategic thinking x quick reflexes=total addiction." The Spectrum, Amiga, ST and PC versions of *E-Motion* were reviewed back in ACE 32. We hope to have a review sample of Gameboy *Harmony* in a couple of months.



Love, life and HARMONY on the Gameboy.

ELIMINATE VIDEO THUMB

Only the Americans can produce a product like the Thumb Master. I quote: "Thumb Master is the hottest new home video game accessory. A must for home video game enthusiasts of all ages (six years to adult). It covers and helps protect the thumb against the soreness that results from pushing the buttons on handheld control pads of home video game systems. Neoprene's flexibility enables free movement and agility of the thumb. It is form fitting and will not slip off the thumb. Thumb Master comes in seven hot colors - Black, Blue, Aqua, Purple, Fluorescent Green, Pink and Hot Pink - in small, medium and large sizes."



ACE gives this a big thumbs up!

ACE wonders when flavoured Thumb Masters will be released. If you're actually interested in purchasing a Thumb Master contact: Bachiero Creations, PO Box 10258, Torrance, CA 90505, USA.

Turning Japanese with DeluxePaint ST.



DIAL 0898 555563 NOW!

ACE
on the line

The ACE Interactive News Line is the only way to get a weekly update on the latest games gossip, future games technology and games currently in development. You can also win special prizes. The News Line is updated every Wednesday afternoon. Calls cost 38p per minute (peak), 25p per minute (off-peak). You're just a phone-call away from the future...

DELUXEPAIN ST HITS ST

Electronic Arts is finally going to release its *DeluxePaint* art package onto the ST. This popular program is already 'the' graphics software standard on the Amiga - it is used by every games developer in the biz. Now EA is confidently stating that *DeluxePaint ST* is "the ultimate graphics workstation for the ST".

DeluxePaint ST combines paint, animation and printing in one package. Its art and animation facilities are completely usable in 512K, and it boasts more drawing modes, drawing tools and option than any other ST graphic utility."

EA is packing a comprehensive array of features into *DeluxePaint ST*, including realtime magnification in every tool mode, fully controllable four-point bezier curves, nine drawing modes (such as smear, cycle, blend and tint), multi-coloured airbrushes allowing mixing of colours, stencils for protecting specified areas of the screen, proportional colour fonts with six points of kerning, full font editor, three print styles (ordered, halftone and random), multiple printer resolutions, vertical and horizontal printing, and colour poster printing.

DeluxePaint ST supports the extended STE colour palette and can read or write all major graphic formats including Amiga IFF. It will be released in late September for an introductory price of £49.99dk (rising to £59.99 from the beginning of December).



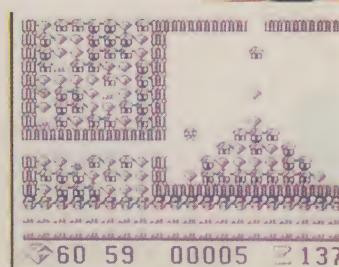
TOUR OF THE UNIVERSE

An exciting new space travel simulation has just opened in Osaka. The Tour of the Universe starts with you receiving a personal ID card at the check-in gate. A transit lift then takes you to the world of 2019. You enter the 21st C with a brief history of space and details of your travel plans (route map). Don't forget the 2019 duty-free space goodies. This is a no pain ride - you get a vac-cine shot in the med-lab before you blast. The space shuttle to Jupiter flies at 90% of the speed of light. The tour costs 2000yen (£8) adults, 1500yen (£6) students and 1000yen (£4) children. It's open every day of the year from 10:00am to 9:00pm.



BOULDERDASH

Boulderdash, the infuriatingly playable C64 classic from First Star Software, has just made an appearance on the Gameboy. Victor Musical Industries converted this Chris Grey and Peter Liepa arcade puzzle game onto Nintendo's mono handheld console. Most C64 *Boulderdash* veterans (including Steve Cooke and myself) agree it would make a perfect Gameboy release. We can't wait to grab a copy... look out for the ACE review.



360° ARCADE ATTACK

Sega is following its hydro arcade hits of *Space Harrier*, *After Burner*, *Galaxy Force II* and *Super Monaco GP* with R-360. This new coin-op sensation has two servo motors (power units) and servo driver (controller) to turn its cockpit 360°. Games will never 'feel' the same again. You'll actually slide, swing and swoop as you blast that end of level sprite. G-Loc is the only game available on this new system at present, but Sega is currently developing more thrilling games to coincide with R-360's official debut later in the autumn. Sega's next project is to build large-scale amusement centers all over Japan. These will, of course, feature the R-360!



GALAXY FORCE II

The classy three-dee Sega shoot'em-up, *Galaxy Force II*, has been converted to the Fujitsu FM Towns by CRI (CSK Research Institute). It costs 9800yen (£39). CRI also handled the excellent FM Towns conversions of *Afterburner* and *Out Run*. Games releases are starting to pick-up on this 32-bit Compact Disc micro. CD-ROM conversions of *Indiana Jones* and the *Last Crusade*, *Dungeon Master*, *Sim City* and *Populous* are now readily available in Japanese stores.

ACE IN JAPAN

What's fun in the land of the Rising Sun? Find out courtesy of this new monthly update by Rik Haynes, with help from Masato Niizeki and ASCII Corporation...



R-TYPE RIDERS

Irem, a leading Japanese games house responsible for the cult coin-op *R-Type*, is sponsoring two top motorbike riders for professional racing.



LEGEND OF THE LOST

THE
SEARCH
IS ON!



IT'S ACTION ALL THE WAY . . . ON A LARGE SCALE!


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SEVEN LEVELS
OF STARTLING
ARCADE ACTION!

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SOFTWARE WITH STYLE



VOODOO NIGHTMARE

"It's dead big and well wiggy!" Boots Parker takes on spiders, scorpions and snakes in darkest Africa. Dodge blowdarts or suffer temporary blindness, paralysis, sleep and hyper-activity. "A monkey will cling to your back and harass you until you have found enough bananas to satisfy him." Palace Software will release this on Amiga and ST at the end of October.

ESWAT



Police the future with Enhanced Special Weapons and Tactics. Eat your heart out Robocop. US Gold multi-

format release for later this year. See the Sega Megadrive review on page 91.

FIREBALL

"Fireball combines the skill of soccer, the speed of ice hockey and the strategy of rollerball." Freak at the floor scroll, gasp at the guardians. "The players are encased in a robotic total-body armour nicknamed the Oven." Amiga and ST release from Microprose.



LOTUS ESPRIT TURBO CHALLENGE

The Lotus Esprit Turbo accelerates from 0 to 60 mph in 4.7 seconds. "In April 1990, Gremlin and Lotus reached an agreement which gives Gremlin the exclusive world rights to use Lotus cars in home computer and console entertainment software. Two fundamental aims. The game

must be better than any similar game available. The game must offer something new in the challenge it presents to the player or players." Inspired by the split sim-play of *Pitstop II*, *Lotus Esprit Turbo Challenge* will be burning rubber in the autumn on Amiga, ST, PC, Spectrum, C64 and CPC.



RICK DANGEROUS II

Tricky Ricky is back. Side splitting cartoon graphics are a definite hit in *RD II*. Rick dies, Rick expands, Rick-o-mortis sets in. Fortunately the game is compulsive enough to keep you coming back for more dealings with the Fat Man. Out for Amiga and ST by Microprose. ACE review next month.



MR DO! RUN RUN

Mr Do! is just doin' the do, and you can too. Based around the classic cult coin-op. From Electrocoin Software for £14.99 on ST and Amiga. Start of a new Arcade Classics label with releases every few weeks. Luther De Gale, the black-belt boss of Electrocoin Software, explains: "The Arcade Classics label supplies the playability and the fun, but with improved graphical and internal features which bring these products into the 90's without losing any of their original appeal."



DREAMS AND VISIONS

Rik Haynes takes a trip to tomorrow...

BUCK ROGERS - COUNTDOWN TO DOOMSDAY



SUDDENLY, SHIPS SCREAM IN LOW FROM THE NORTH. PANDEMOMIUM REIGNS AS THE FIGHTERS DROP THEIR DEADLY CARGO! SHIPS AND CONTROL TOWERS COLLAPSE IN BALLS OF CRIMSON FLAME! PEOPLE PANIC AND SCATTER.

PRESS ANY KEY TO CONTINUE

(Russo-American Mercantile). Due in September on Amiga, PC and C64 disk. No other versions are planned. "Buck Rogers is a trademark owned by, and used under license from, The Dille Family Trust."

Buck Rogers, pilot of the future, is making mega bucks for TSR. "US Gold will be fully exploiting the cross-marketing opportunities that Buck Rogers offers. Indeed, we have already signed a cross-promotional deal with Penguin Books." For cross read gross? *Countdown to Doomsday* will use a similar game system to *Pool of Radiance*. Be NEO (New Earth Organisation) and foil RAM

GREMLINS 2

Don't expose them to light. Don't get them wet. Don't feed them after midnight. *Gremlins 2 - The New Batch* movie grossed \$2,507,143 in the first three days. Will the forthcoming computer game from Elite pack a similar performance?



XIPHOS



THE UNIVERSE UNFOLDS



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Role Playing Rumpus

All this RPG action, on the increase since the success of games like *Heroes of the Lance* and *Ultima*, has got one reader up in arms...

A LOAD OF BULL! I am writing to complain in the strongest terms about the panel on page 84 of issue 34, entitled RPG-Rip Offs! It is really a load of bull, to be quite frank. Any computer game which says RPG on the cover is misleading the customer. This is simply because a computer role playing game is not possible!

A role playing game is just that: you play roles. It is very like acting. It is not a product of the number of characters present, or a product of the number of characteristics that these characters have. Role playing stems from the way characters behave in certain situations, the way they speak to others, their personal idiosyncrasies. It is quite possible to have four characters with exactly the same characteristics, but which are all very different.

Computer RPG's simply cannot allow for such character development, and therefore they cannot really be called RPG's. You have to agree that, in a CRPG, if the characters have the same characteristics, they will

behave in the same manner, and this is simply not so in a real RPG.

Finally, let me tear your RPG character apart, point by point.

1. The numbers of characters in a party has absolutely no effect on whether or not the game is an RPG.
2. Even if each character had 57 attributes, the game would not be an RPG.
3. Remember Doombard's Revenge on the Spectrum? Each 'character' in that game had well over 4 attributes, all of which had a noticeable effect on the game. Would you call this an RPG?
4. All games should have SAVE options!
5. I once had a pair of identical twins in an AD&D game. One was a lawful good priest dedicated to healing all ills, the other was an evil assassin dedicated to eliminating all life on Krynn.

6. In a true RPG there would be an infinite number of character classes, as characters are free to do whatever they like.

Don't get me wrong. If all programmers stuck to your charter then it would be a wonderful world to play games in! However, not a single one of these wonderful computer games would be an RPG, not even the most powerful CRAY supercomputer could replace the Dungeon Master!! Tony Park, Tottington

WE'RE WAITING!

Daniel Mather thinks *Wumpus Hunt* will be the top game of the future, along with *Whacky Waiters* and *Scott Adams* adventures. He's just one of the people who gave us a good laugh (and sometimes a good cry) with their letters this month. Next issue we will be running three pages of letters and we're dying to hear from you. Flashy types can fax us on 071 490 1094 and the snail delivers the mail to ACE Letters, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU - and every month we give £25 of free software to the sender of the ACE Prize Letter.

IT'S A BARGAIN?

Last month we published some correspondence from readers who were complaining about the cost of software. We asked software houses to reply but in the rush to go to press most spokesmen were 'unavailable'. Electronic Zoo and Electronic Arts both put their heads on the block, however...

"We'd love to see prices reduced, but until piracy stops it won't happen. The industry is still in a ghetto when it comes to developing software - there just haven't been enough machines sold to enable us to drop the price."

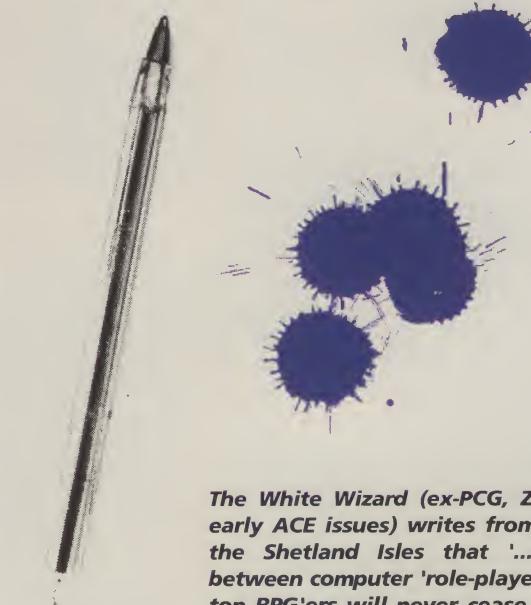
Stuart Bell, Electronic Zoo

"We spend at LEAST two man years development on our titles. Although we would like to see prices drop, until the market base increases they are likely to stay as they are."

Simon Jeffries, Electronic Arts

...and finally, ACE editor Steve Cooke claims that:

"...at the end of the day, however, the true test of pricing is whether the user will buy a product and feel he has received value for money. Of course there are some turkeys out there, but there are still many games around that, given the hours of pleasure they can bring, are bargains at the price. Most pricing moans are really criticisms of the product, not the money."



The White Wizard (ex-PCG, Zzap 64, and early ACE issues) writes from his cave in the Shetland Isles that "...the conflict between computer 'role-players' and table top RPG'ers will never cease. In the final analysis, no, you can never have a true role-playing game on a computer. But so-called computer RPG's have developed a life of their own and game designers like Richard (*Ultima*) Garriott and Interplay (*Bards Tale*) deserve credit for this. The RPG Charter seems a reasonable set of statements to me - as you seem to imply yourself in your final para - but only if it is applied to computer role playing games - which is exactly what was intended.

FUTURE SHOCKS

I am writing to you from the far distant future to aid you in your quest to find out what the fates have in store for computer gaming.

Here in my time, one all-pervasive force has a stranglehold over the entire computer community, leaving all other computer systems out in the cold. The brilliant Amiga C8000 with stunning mind-graphics and twin read/write CD drives doesn't even get a look in. Even the Atari STFM-E-FMV-TOS Enhanced 4096+ with twin 32-bit processors and dedicated 68000 graphics processor is left for dead.

In fact, the only computers that are permitted by the Emperor Ibern Bert Miles (known as IBM) are the IBM range, the latest of which is the IBM PS/5 80986. No other computers are allowed!

Actually, this isn't too bad, since the graphics standard on the new model is SE-EVGA Professional, with a resolution of 2560*2048 in more colours than the eye can discern. The PS/5 also has a 96 bit processor running at 109 MIPS. This PC costs 7590 IBMdollars, which is pretty much the same as 500 of your time's one pound floppies.

Admittedly, excluding all competition by death threats is not a nice way to carry on, but IBM is backed by the Emperor so that can get away with it.

As for software, there is a slight deficiency here - only one game is allowed, but luckily it is an amalgamation of virtually all game styles - incredibly interesting, deep, and great fun too. The name of the game? Elite 20.

The object of the game is to become Elite and fly your ship (preferably in

the PS/5's hydraulic cabinet) watching the unbelievable 3D graphics - 95000506 polygons are used for the torpedoes alone. Once you have attained Elite status you become real life Prime Minister of Earth colony 06 (planet Earth to you), but as yet there are colossal efforts by people to replace the Prime Minister (Mrs Thatcher) every day.

So there you have it. The future of the games industry is Elite 2 on the PC. An utterly amazing game with incredible graphics and blinding depths of gameplay. However there is one major downfall of the program, a small flaw with the computer design that causes a great loss to the gamesplaying experience...It's like this: when IBM designed the first 8088PC they did not envisage it as a games machine, and only provided a pathetic sound chip and tinny speaker.

Since then, IBM have not bothered to upgrade the PC sound, so whenever you let off a huge 95000506 polygon torpedo glistening into the moody starlight with its awesome exhaust trail...

...you get a little beep to show it has launched. And another if it destroys the enemy. And when you converse with an alien...Well...er...

David Stafford, Citizen No 06-16028086

Some things never change: PC sound, Mac prices, and Spectrum graphics...

GAMEBOY GLORY

I've got this little gadget called the Gameboy. Its graphics are laughable and the sound is just better than the Spectrum's. But when it comes to playability it knocks out my (expensive) ST! Why is it that most 16-bit computer games are rubbish compared to console games? I think that there is something substantially wrong with the UK programmer's view of writing/converting a game. Why not get in touch with the Japanese programmers and swap some tips etc? (The PC Engine's Chase HQ beats the ST and Amiga versions hands down. Is the hardware used comparable?)

Could you please review some GAMEBOY games? I've seen that there are lots of new games coming out like Batman, Double Dragon, Nemesis, NFL Football etc.

Jay Lee, The Netherlands.

Firstly, to say that "most 16-bit computer games are rubbish compared to console games" must either mean that you continually play/buy all the wrong 16-bit software, or that the titles you considered unworthy in the past have soured your view somewhat. In addition to which, you don't say which type of game you find better on the console. All of them? If so, you must surely realise what a generalised, inaccurate statement this is.

However, we agree with you about the general high standard of Gameboy titles, and we're covering them more and more (see this issue's Console Screen test section).



F-29 RETALIATION

After recently purchasing AMOS and not so recently F-29 Retaliator for the Amiga, I thought that something had to be said about the quality of products arriving on the market.

Don't get me wrong. F-29 does contain some of the best vector graphics and sound yet to be beaten, but the sheer number of bugs that were so blatantly obvious after playing for several hours put me off the game totally. Since then I have played the game very little as I feel that the bugs ruin the game to such an extent as to make it unplayable. For instance, the multi-function display unit contains an artificial horizon that is at the best of times incomprehensible. Also, while flying past a piece of scenery, it is possible to crash into it yet you are not actually touching it.

This seemingly bug-ridden game cost me £25 and after playing it I came to the conclusion that either the playtesters were blind or that the product hadn't been playtested at all.

Now onto Mandarin's AMOS. After reading several reviews of this new BASIC language, I decided to buy it which incidentally cost me £50.

AMOS had been presented with an excellent manual and an even better editor. Several hours later the computer crashed again for the seventh time, so I decided enough was enough for that day and switched the computer off.

No more than a week later I had discovered that more than several commands documented in the manual did not actually exist which to me seems unbelievable. Admittedly there are over 500 commands, it says, but to me this does not justify the amount of checking that had not gone into the

product costing £50, which is such a shame because AMOS is an excellent product.

My message to all software houses is that unless their products are checked more thoroughly they cannot really moan when people prefer playing safe and copying software than buying software with the chance that it is bug-ridden.

Lastly, on a somewhat lighter note, just as important. Do you still sell the ACE Binder as I have all 35 issues but have no binder to put the last 11 issues in.

Stephen Williams, Reading.

ACE was the only magazine to specifically mention the bugs in F29 when we reviewed it. We were assured at the time by Ocean that bug-ridden versions would be withdrawn. In our opinion (and we're not lawyers, remember), if bugs make a game unplayable then it is not fit for the purpose for which it was sold and you should be entitled to a refund from the dealer. Perhaps you might like to check with your local Consumer Advice Centre for guidance.

P.S.

Don't forget - we give a prize every month to the sender of the letter that occupies the Prize Letter slot on these pages. Every Prize Letter scribbler gets a software prize worth up to £25 for his or her machine, so get that pen out now and address the world...

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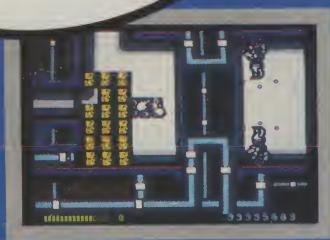
GAMES



ATARI ST



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SPECTRUM



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IBM PC



AMSTRAD

MIKE and the MECHANICS

Wildfire, the follow-up to *Midwinter*, is one of the most ambitious projects in the history of strategy action games. If you thought *Lords of Midnight* and *Midwinter* were big, wait till you map Wildfire's 120Mb of fractal landscapes.

"There are approximately 40-50 missions in *Wildfire*, each has the scope of *Midwinter*," confirms Mike Singleton – director of Maelstrom Games and veteran games creator.

Wildfire plays in a similar way to *Midwinter* – only Maelstrom has tweaked its gameplay to the boundaries of recognition. Singleton took note of gameplayers' praise and criticism of *Midwinter*, "We're trying to make *Wildfire* like an action movie, with you taking the role of a James Bond/Indiana Jones style character. We'll mimic this within a solid graphics environment. With *Wildfire*, you can choose a short mission, lasting 1-2 hours, for a quick blast. But if you want, the strategy elements link-up together to create a campaign style of game."

GO WILD IN THE COUNTRY

The story so far... After the thaw of *Midwinter* Island, the population have moved south to what were once the Cape Verde islands, off the West coast of Africa. Already known as the Slave Isles, these archipelagos are under the control of the powerful Saharan Empire. Once established in their new home, the *Midwinter*'s form a new state, the Atlantic Federation. War with the Saharan Empire is inevitable. Playing a secret agent, you're on a covert mission to recruit more Slave Isles to the fledgling Federation. You'll have to fight for your freedom, but at least you get six months grace before the Saharan Armada sets off to kick your rebel butt.

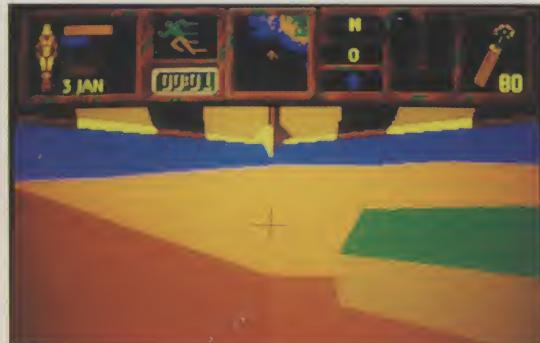
Wildfire can be played on three different levels: Training, Solo Mission (a single mission on an enemy held island) and Campaign Game (a variety of

What is Mike Singleton, veteran games creator of *Midwinter* and *Lords of Midnight*, working on now? Rik Haynes exclusively previews *WILDFIRE*, the follow-up to *Midwinter*, and

STARLORD...



THE WILDFIRE BUNCH: (back row) Bruce Butterfield (Generally Assisting), George Williamson (Programmer), Mike Singleton (Project Leader, Game Design, Maths R&D), Hugh Battenbury (Business Brains), Andy Elkerton (Graphics Designer), Mandy Parker (Research and Preparation of Wildfire Text), (front row) Dave 'Dav' Gaurtry (Programmer), Val Franco (Programmer), Dave 'Ollie' Ollman (Senior Programmer).



An early shot of *WILDFIRE* in action. Don't worry about the strange colour of the control panel. The 3D graphics are enhanced versions of those found in *Midwinter*.

ISLANDS IN THE SUN

Maelstrom uses fractal graphics to generate the Slave Isles in *Wildfire*. There are 40-50 major islands in the group, each with their own individual political, administrative and cultural identity. Using icons, you can select a flat map, isometric side-view, sea-bed or political map of the area. Covering some 600 miles, the Slave Isles are based on the Cape Verde islands off the West coast of Africa.



missions on different islands. Each mission effectively self-contained. Once these missions have been mastered, you fight a running battle with the Saharan Armada as it heads for the Federation home base.

YOUR MISSION SHOULD YOU ACCEPT IT...

There are 40-50 major islands in *Wildfire*. Every one has its own political, administrative and cultural perspective. Each contains a particular mission. During the game you could: sabotage a power station, smuggle arms to the resistance, assassinate an island's chief of secret police, capture a TV station or hunt out and eliminate a traitor in the

resistance. The missions can be very complex, detailed and filled with subplots. In the first example (sabotage a power station), you might have to steal explosives from a local army base, find the engineer who designed the power station, free his daughter from jail to persuade him to hand over the plans, hijack an army truck to use as a vehicle, kill the sentry, plant the explosives and escape to safety.

Although you're pretty much on your own, you can find or recruit resistance fighters for information, shelter, food, clothing, weapons, ammunition, papers and transport. *Wildfire* will incorporate 20-25 forms of transport, including: biplanes, zeppelins, flying boats, rocket packs, jetskis, tanks, trains and rope slides.

Maelstrom has added 'Special Action Sequences' to make *Wildfire* more 'film-like'. "During the game you can enter buildings, lay dynamite, pick up weapons and switch vehicles without leaving the solid graphics environment," states Singleton.

I WANT TO BE A PEARL DIVER

Wildfire will feature thousands of individual human characters to interact with. Amazingly, each will have their own looks, personality and life history. Maelstrom's custom-made character designer is an ingenious solution to the immense problem of creating the huge amounts of data required by every character in *Wildfire*. Split into several editors, the character designer is used to create individual portraits, personalities and life-stories.

With the face creator you choose the hair style and colour, nose, mouth, eyes, ears, skin tone, etc and lay them out on a blank face according to taste. "Hopefully the faces will be polygon generated - allowing them to be animated and show expression," says Singleton.

LORDS OF LYNX
If the Lynx colour hand-held console does well, Maelstrom will probably convert *Lords of Midnight* over to it. "The Lynx is the perfect console for *Lords of Midnight* because of the sprite scaling," says Mike Singleton. So keep your fingers crossed!

'an' where appropriate. In this example, the 'she' and 'childhood' could also be substituted for other words.

Time to get personal. The character designer also specifies the characters sex (male or female - no aliens allowed at present), status (single, married, divorced, widowed), no. of children, age, title (rabbi, nurse, sergeant, bishop, mullah, etc), forename, surname, occupation, eagerness and treachery (0-100%). The *Wildfire* job market is wide and diverse, including occupations as: archeolo-



Displaying your physical health.

FORMING A FRACTAL FANTASY

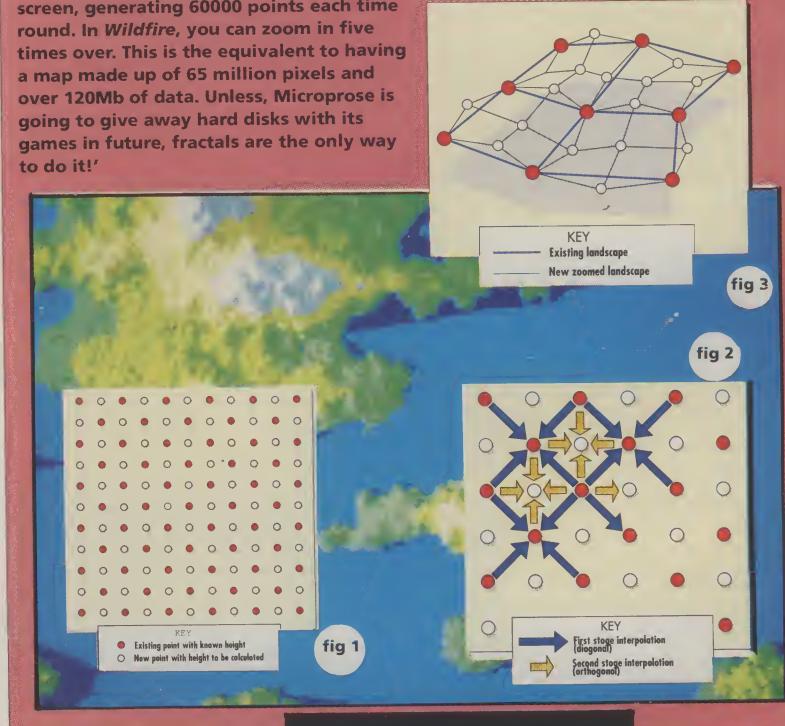
Any irregular shape, form or distribution retains its irregularity at any magnification. Fractal geometry, invented by Professor Benoit Mandelbrot, is used to "create shapes that are perfectly repeatable, controllable and have measurable properties which are at the same time indistinguishable, to a large extent, from the messiness of the world". In effect, fractal graphics can simulate artificial worlds which look natural and feel real. They've been used in military simulators, movies and Maelstrom's *Midwinter* and *Wildfire* computer games. Mike Singleton explains how:

"Maelstrom's fractal landscape generator works on a square grid with each point in the grid given its own particular height above or below sea level. This is called the heightgrid. When the landscape is displayed in solid 3D, the graphics routines look at the heightgrid and interpret it as a three dimensional surface - displaying each square in the grid as two right-angled triangles. If we draw the square as a single surface, we get visual errors because with each of the four corner points having different heights. It's not flat. On the other hand, every triangle is, without fail, a flat surface."

"We start with a small, predefined grid of 80x50 control points, so we can manipulate the broad outlines of the landscape. Someone sits down and manually sets the heights of all three points using our landscape designer utility. This way, the rough shapes of islands, mountain ranges, etc can be mimicked quite realistically. Beyond this, however, random fractal techniques take over and fill in the detail of all the in-between points. As we zoom in further, more in-between points are fractally generated. By the time we'd zoomed in on our map of Britain to the level of the Isle of Wight, you'd notice that the rough outline is still faithful but some of the details are different to the real thing."

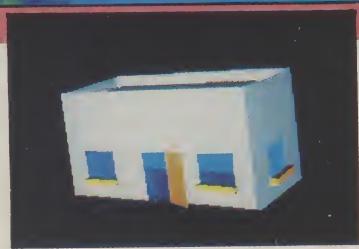
"At each level of zoom, we do a 2x2 magnification. This means generating three new in-between points for every existing point (see fig 1). To generate in-between points, we use a 4-way interpolation (see fig 2). To make a new point, we take the four nearest existing points and average their heights. We then add a small negative or positive displacement to the average height to increase or decrease the new height. The displacement is chosen pseudo-randomly. A pseudo-random number is one that looks random but can, in fact, be reproduced again and again providing you use the same seed number. We use the map coordinate of the new point as the seed number for the random displacement, so that each time we generate the same area of landscape, we get exactly the same design. The result is a new heightgrid (see fig 3) with four times as many points. All the in-between points differ slightly from the average height at that position, creating new bumps and dips each time you zoom in."

"To keep memory requirements to a minimum, we only store 4000 points in memory at any one time. To expand this to a full-screen map with each pixel having its own particular height, we do two unseen magnifications before writing to the screen, generating 60000 points each time round. In *Wildfire*, you can zoom in five times over. This is the equivalent to having a map made up of 65 million pixels and over 120Mb of data. Unless, Microprose is going to give away hard disks with its games in future, fractals are the only way to do it!"



"I'd like to do a virtual reality version of *Lords of Midnight*."

Mike Singleton



One of the Arab-style buildings in *WILDFIRE*.

gist, acrobat, beggar, belly dancer, chat show host, chimney sweep, DJ, demolition expert, errand boy, engraver, faith healer, fire eater, grave digger, guru (Steve Cooke), hermit (Steve Cooke again), layabout (Rik Haynes), monk, pearl diver, pimp, ratcatcher, snake charmer and tattooist.

Susceptibility to persuasion is another character feature in the edit suite. A character's reactions to charm, sex appeal, bribery, threats, reason, pleading, authority and deception can each be set at poor, average, good or excellent. Each character can agree to help, be non-committal, refuse or refuse with violence.

So with this full character designer and cunning memory compression techniques, Maelstrom is creating up to 2000 individual characters in *Wildfire*, each with their very own history, personality and portrait. As Singleton points out, "One of the objectives with *Wildfire* is to get personalities in the game."

Wildfire is shaping up to be the megagame of 1990. The size and complexity of the game is incredible. I've only scratched the surface of the game in this preview. If Mike and his micro mechanics can deliver all that's promised, they have the makings of an ACE-Rated game. Look out for a full ACE review in the near future. I'll leave the final words to Mike Singleton, "We want to make *Wildfire* authentic, interesting, and above all, fun to play."

MIDWINTER SECRETS

You can fly the hang glider into the cable-car station and land inside. This is the only building you can enter in the game. Be warned, it's very difficult to do! If you're very skillful, you can even fly-in through the door and fly-out through the window.

ONCE AN ENGLISH TEACHER

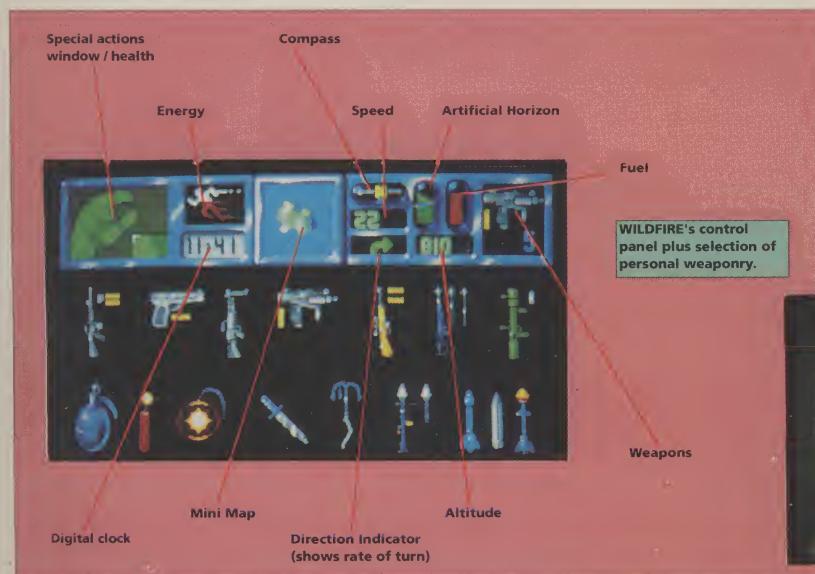
Mike Singleton began his coding career by programming a mainframe computer at Lancaster University back in 1968. "It was a good time to be a student," laughs Singleton. He studied theoretical physics for a year before deciding life would be more groovy as an English teacher. Singleton wrote his first game, *Space Ace* for the Commodore Pet in 1979. Other Pet games followed, but Singleton's first hit came with the *ZX81 Games Pack One*, a compilation of six 1K games, earned him £6000. Singleton's job as a teacher was over, his career as a full-time games creator had begun.

During 1982, Singleton wrote Vic-20 versions of *Snake Pit*, *Shadowfax* and *Siege*. He dabbled in cyberspace the following year, with *Three Deep Space*, a stereoscopic game for the Spectrum, C64, BBC and Vic-20. Perhaps Singleton's most widely-regarded game was released in 1984 by Beyond - which, at the time, was owned by Emap (the company behind ACE). *Lords of Midnight*, an epic fantasy strategy adventure, was soon regarded a classic Spectrum game.

Over the next three years, Singleton developed *Doomdark's Revenge* (follow-up to *Lords of Midnight*), *Quake Minus One* (icon-driven strategy arcade game for the C64), *Star Trek* (started life as a multivision system demo on the Spectrum - Singleton just provided the games design), *Dark Septre* (Maelstrom's first game), *War in Middle Earth* (8-bit versions only) and *Whirlygig* (3D shoot'em-up with 4000 polygons per second - the polygons were turned into sprites for extra speed).

Singleton started a 'nice little sideline' in 1981. *Starlord* was a popular sci-fi play-by-mail-game which continued on till 1986. Maelstrom is now converting *Starlord* into a computer game, due for release sometime in 1991.

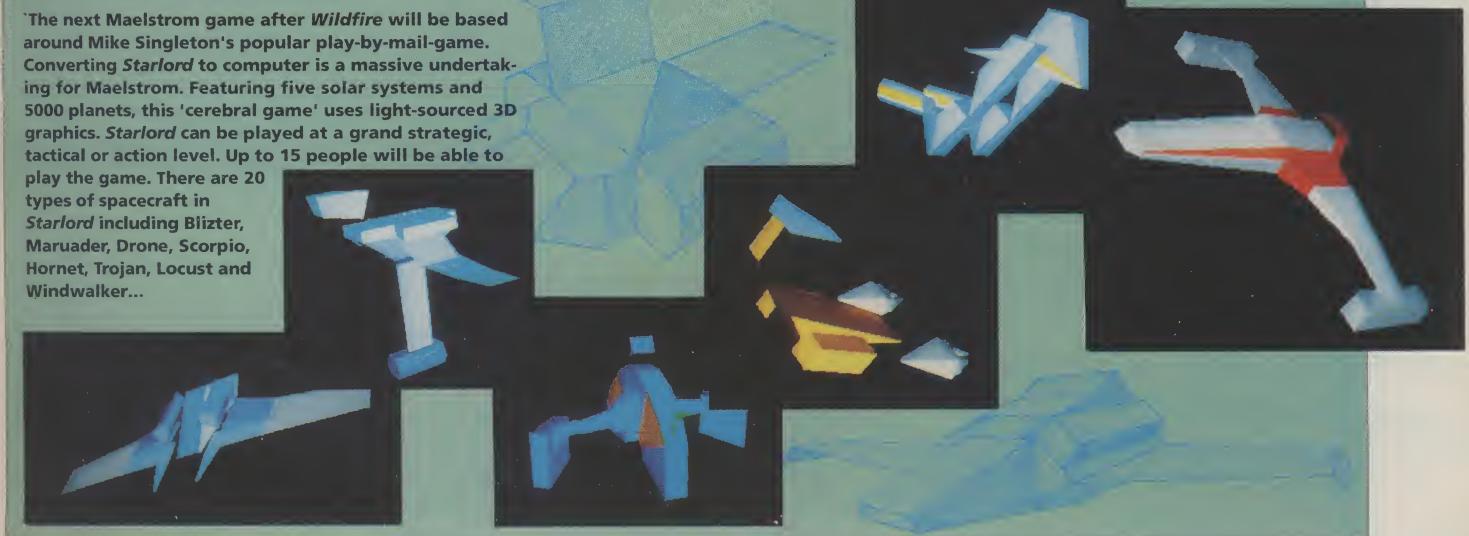
Maelstrom's first 16-bit megagame, the 948 ACE-Rated *Midwinter*, was released earlier this year (see ACE 32). *Wildfire*, the sequel to *Midwinter*, will be the next Maelstrom game - scheduled to be released in November by Microprose on the Rainbird label.



Face creating editor (see I Want to be a Pearl Diver body text). You'll be able to design your own character in the game using this system.

STARLORD

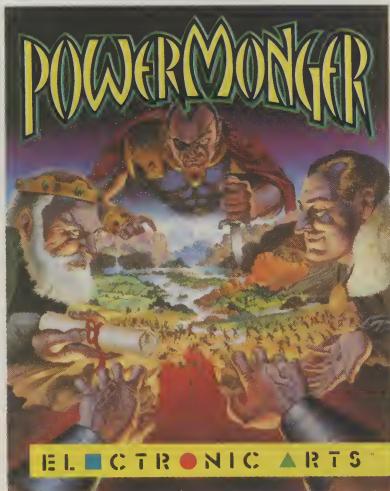
The next Maelstrom game after *Wildfire* will be based around Mike Singleton's popular play-by-mail-game. Converting *Starlord* to computer is a massive undertaking for Maelstrom. Featuring five solar systems and 5000 planets, this 'cerebral game' uses light-sourced 3D graphics. *Starlord* can be played at a grand strategic, tactical or action level. Up to 15 people will be able to play the game. There are 20 types of spacecraft in *Starlord* including Blitzer, Marauder, Drone, Scorpio, Hornet, Trojan, Locust and Windwalker...



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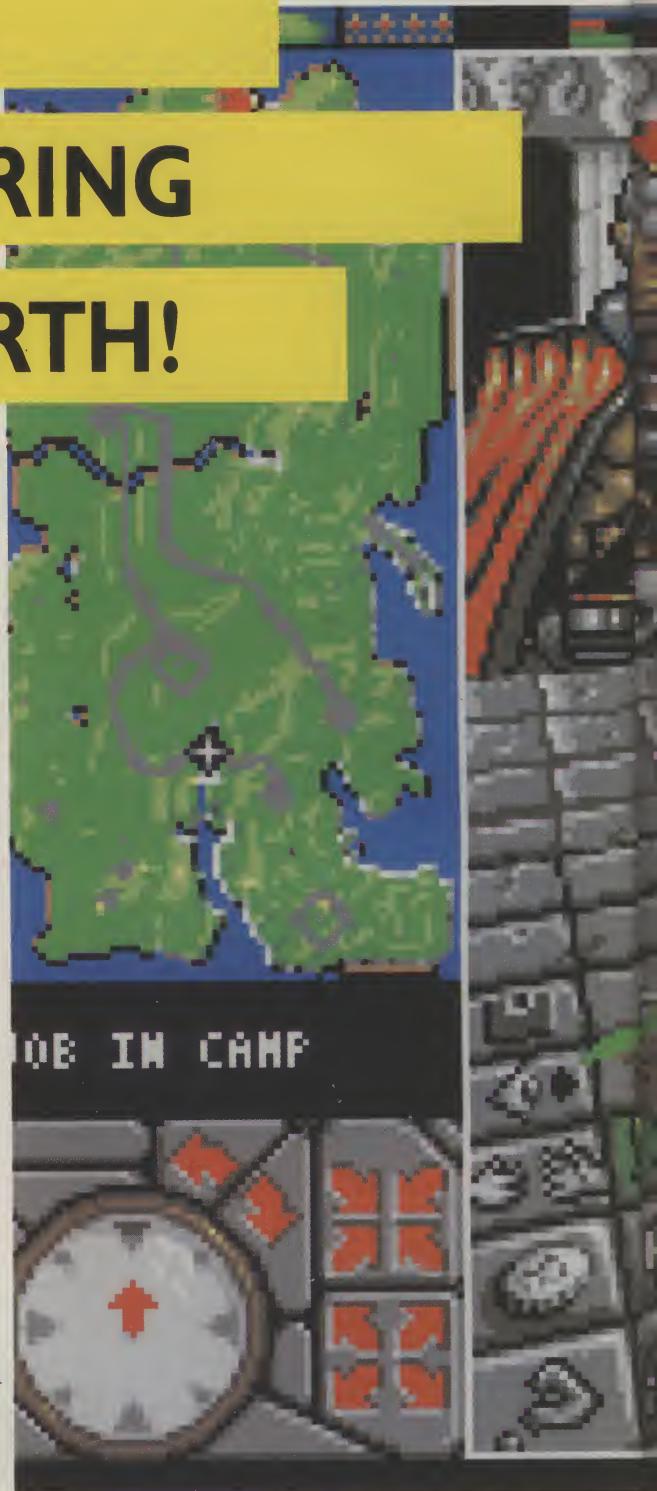
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Be as mean as them and match force with force, or be more cunning, play Mr Nice Guy and win over the local villagers.

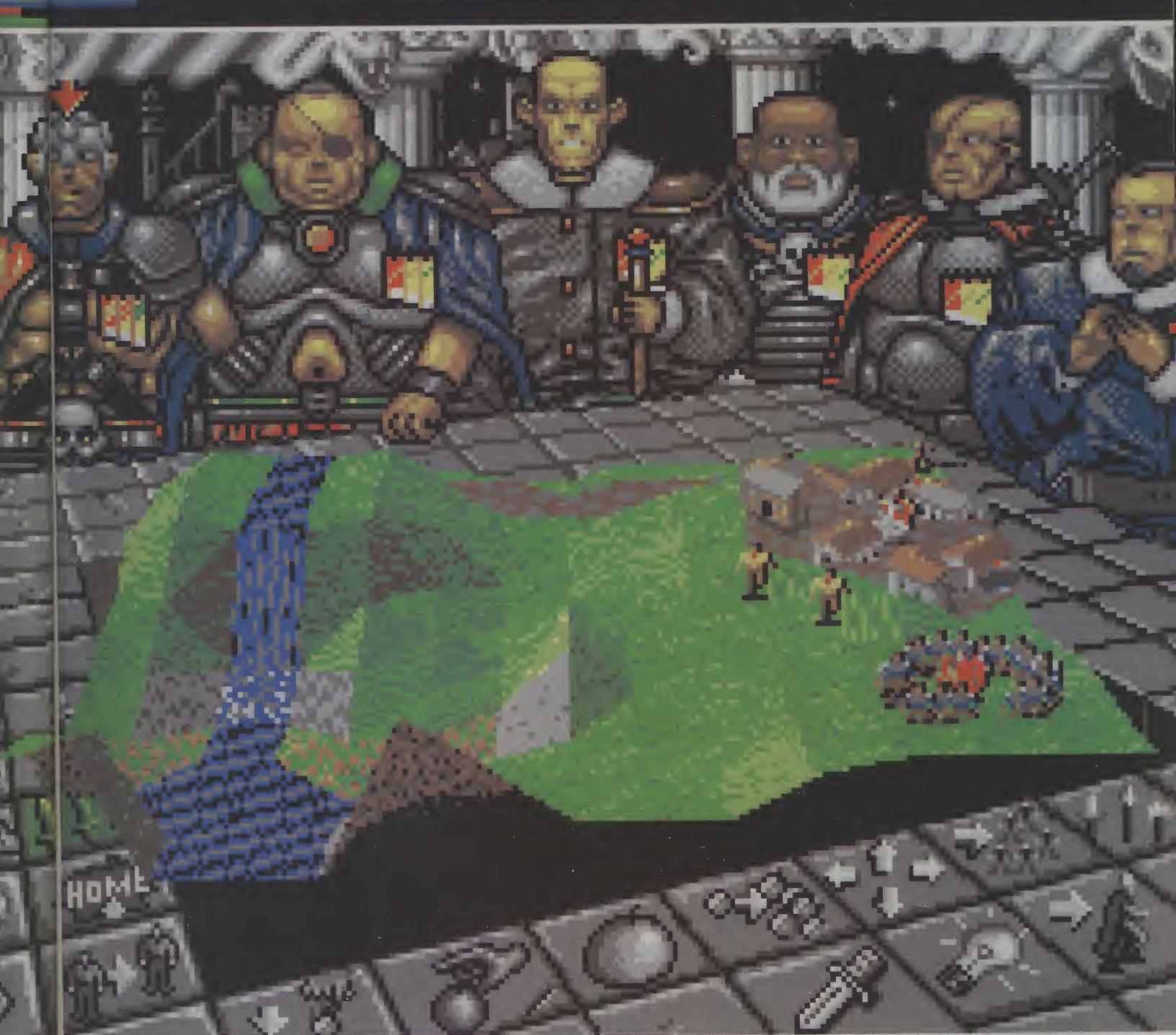
By doing so you not only swell your numbers, but also keep your larders stocked, which is essential in ensuring the loyalty of your army.

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E. I.



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The custom-made world editor is one of DID's most powerful game creation tools. "We can build a world in 30 minutes," says Martin Kenwright. "The world editor loads in all the 3D shapes, ranging from runways to ray guns. It allows us to create complete game landscapes viewed from any angle. We can have massive scenarios with vehicles like tanks and space craft all doing their own thing. Creating a 3D world is now simplicity itself." Together, these four editors account for 10Mb of source code. This screenshot shows the fighters and buildings from Epic, using the colour-scheme from Retaliator. Note the large size of the radar-like gun dish. DID are designing gigantic complexes and craft for use in Epic. All these objects will be to scale when you play the game! The ion cannon is part of the defense network which protects the home solar system of your enemy.

LET'S GET



"Hopefully RETALIATOR 2 will be more interactive," says Phil Allsopp. The successor will feature the new F-22B carrier-based fighter, MiG Ferret stealth-fighter, AH-64 Apache and Hind-D helicopter gunships, A-10 Thunderbolt, SU-27 Soviet jet, and all the original aircraft from the first game.

POLYGON POWER

DID has been working on some revolutionary 3D graphics routines and editors since completing *F-29 Retaliator*. The new ultrafast graphics engine forms the core of *Epic* and *Retaliator 2* - with polygon discs, cones, spheres, true ellipses, standard shapes (lines, triangles, squares and rectangles), thousands of objects (up to 256x16 3D movements, rotations and turns), 13 scales of grey, a see-through hash palette with a maximum of 64 colours made out of 16, and different ranges of density for clouds, force-fields, etc.

Digital Image Design, the team behind *F-29 Retaliator*, is currently developing *EPIC* and *RETLIATOR 2*. Rik Haynes reports from Runcorn...

“W

e produced the flight-sim of the year... within a year," states Martin Kenwright of Digital Image Design - the software development team responsible for Ocean's highly successful *F-29 Retaliator* flight simulation.

Started in March 1989, Runcorn-based DID consists of eight people: Martin Kenwright (Director, Designer), Phil Allsopp (Director, Amiga/ST Programmer), Russ Payne (Director, Amiga/ST Programmer), Andy Torkington (Amiga/ST Programmer), Paul Hollywood (3D Programmer, Graphic Artist), Rob Ball (Graphic Artist), Jason Brooke (PC Programmer) and Liddon Brooke (Graphic Artist). Before DID, these guys worked on *Falcon* and *Flight of the Intruder* for Mirrorsoft.

The ACE-Rated *F-29 Retaliator* caught the imagination of both flight-sim fanatics and gameplayers who hadn't even thought of buying this type of game before. So how will DID top the success of its first release?

DIGITAL FUTURES

DID is looking to tomorrow. It is already developing state-of-the-art software technologies for use in Compact Disc systems. "CD games will take longer to develop - around 1-2 years per project. We will have more people in our development team, with twice as many graphic artists than programmers. The whole design of a CD game is storyboarded similar to a movie because of the massive structure of the program. In effect, CD games will become interactive movies. In five years, there will be increased liaison between film companies and studios, musicians and software developers. Imagine a computer game with a movie licence tie-in, using original or specially adapted movie footage," predicts Martin Kenwright.

"Piracy will become almost non-existent, and software will appeal to a far wider scope of people. With no keyboard required, even Granny will have a go! Unfortunately, programmers and artists will get carried away with this mass of memory and forget about gameplay."

Are you interested in the future of games technology? DID is looking for talented programmers, artists and musicians. Just fax Martin Kenwright on 0928 579975.



◀ An aircraft carrier in the middle of a field, what's going on? RETALIATOR 2 contains two American carriers: Roosevelt and JF Kennedy. It also has Russian Delta Class submarines and the US Ohio sub fitted with Trident II missiles.



◀ DID is trying to emulate an arcade game with EPIC, each game should last 30 minutes.



Part of EPIC's intro sequence. DID's new graphics system incorporates a bitmap 3D/vector map system with animated polygons, sprites and bitmap graphics. Built-in algorithms sort out the correct polygon order and three dimensional collision detection. You can also have digitised audio - all doing their thang at the same time.

"Origin's Wingleader (see ACE 35) is the closest thing we've seen to our system," says Martin Kenwright.



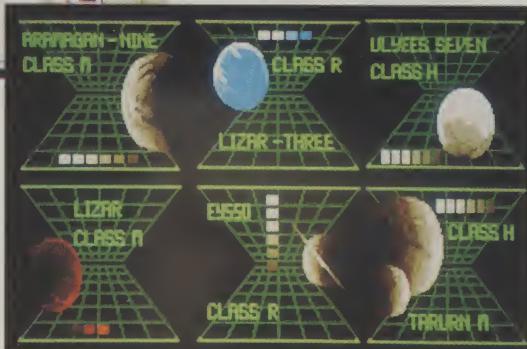
◀ A craft close-up in EPIC. Your ship is armed with a 50000 Megaton cobalt salted device, ion steam heavy assault gun, photon beam and laser waves.

"We can build a world in 30 minutes."

Martin Kenwright



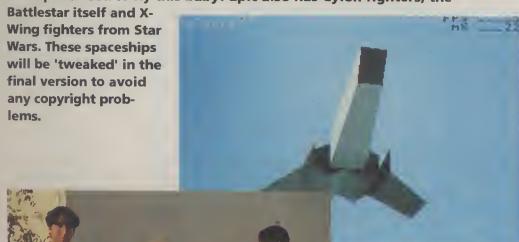
◀ EPIC was originally going to be Goldrunner 3D - until Microdeal decided to pull out of the games industry! DID bought the game back, sold it to Ocean, and renamed it Epic.



Some planet data for your EPIC spacecraft cockpit. Each planet with have its own atmospheric conditions like heavy storms and strong gravity pull.

DIGITAL

Many of the spacecraft from EPIC have been 'inspired' by sci-fi movies, including this Viper fighter from Battlestar Galactica. Remember Starbuck and Apollo used to fly this baby! Epic also has Cylon fighters, the Battlestar itself and X-Wing fighters from Star Wars. These spaceships will be 'tweaked' in the final version to avoid any copyright problems.



in his RS Turbo. He responded by purchasing a dashboard radar-detector - we wonder when he'll fit Beyond Visual Range missiles!

Three DID'ers: Martin Kenwright (left), Phil Allsopp and Andy Torkington. Kenwright was recently pulled over for doing 145mph



Flying your EPIC spacecraft into the carrier ship. DID is trying to include a manual landing facility.



"The bugs in the first version of Retaliator were annoying, but people wanted it in any state."

Martin Kenwright



RETIATOR RETURNS

"Retaliator 2 is a totally new concept with faster 3D graphics routines. It's going to be better in every way to F-29," says Martin Kenwright. "You control a kick ass squadron of US superfighters, ready to be assigned to any hotspot around the world. The polygon graphics generators have been completely overhauled and now include ellipses and improved clipping. The level editor allows us to create complex scenarios with primary and secondary missions. We also want to incorporate a head-to-head option. Retaliator 2 has taken a back seat to Epic, but should be finished in the first quarter of 1991."

NOW SHOWING ON AMIGA • ATARI ST IBM PC & COMPATIBLES

OUR AA RATED BACK



Mean Streets

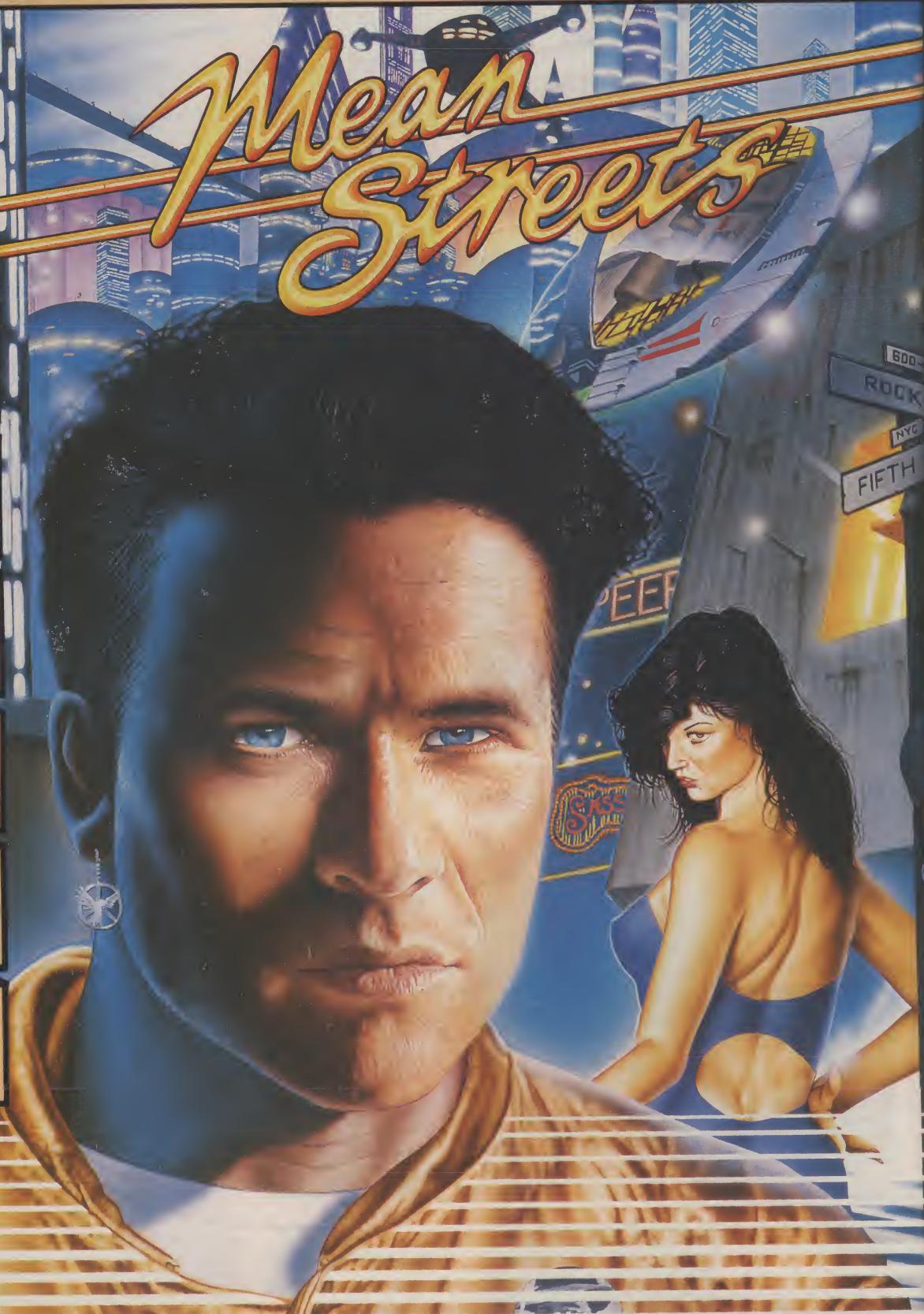
An Interactive Detective Story

Features:

- Interact with more than 27 digitised characters and respond to questions, bribes and threats.

- Use the innovative 'point 'n' click' system which enables you to search without typing.
- Fly your 'Lotus speeder' to locations all along the West Coast.

- Rummage through offices, warehouses and factories looking for clues.

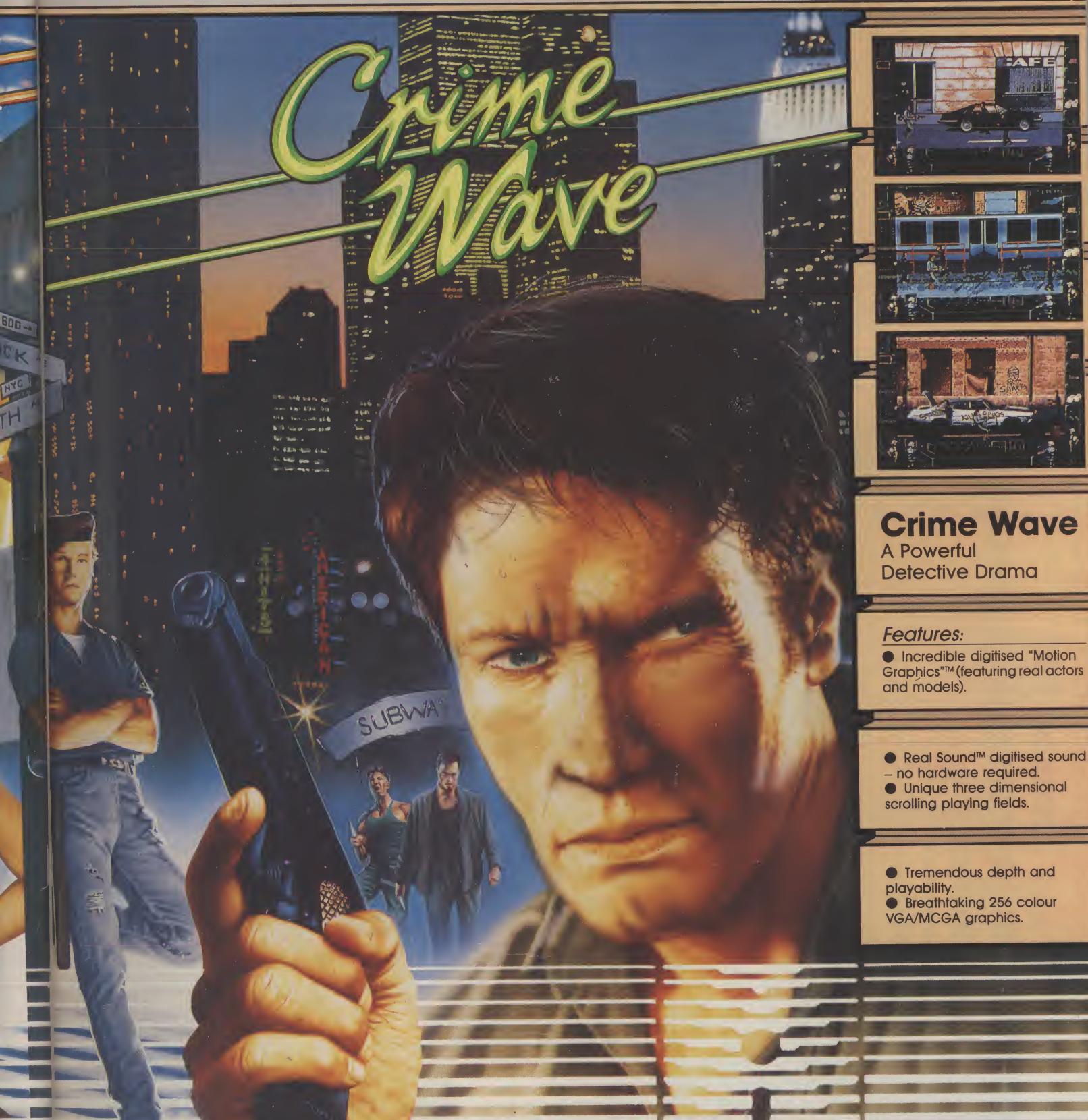


U.S. GOLD

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ON A PC NEAR YOU TO BACK FEATURE

AMIGA • ATARI ST
IBM PC & COMPATIBLES



Crime Wave

A Powerful Detective Drama

Features:

- Incredible digitised "Motion Graphics"™ (featuring real actors and models).

- Real Sound™ digitised sound – no hardware required.
- Unique three dimensional scrolling playing fields.

- Tremendous depth and playability.
- Breathtaking 256 colour VGA/MCGA graphics.

Screen shots are only intended to be illustrative of the game play and not the screen graphics which vary considerably between different formats in quality and appearance and are subject to the computer's specifications.

ACCESS™
Software Incorporated

Get Shreddy!

...for something Turtly different!

IMAGE WORKS



Spectrum version: heading along the upper platform of one of the warehouses



Overhead view of the street. Access to the underground sequences is via the manholes

T

he story of how four baby turtles were accidentally washed into the new York sewer system, mutated (by a substance called Mutagen) into something other than your everyday amphibian and trained to become Ninja Warriors by a giant rat named Splinter is already a legend.

Whether you're obsessed with cash (see panel), violence (the UK authorities insisted on calling the little ninjas 'heroes'), healthfood (they set a terrible example, existing almost entirely on pizza), or Renaissance art (Splinter named them after his favourite Renaissance Artists), you'll find a sympathetic (or unsympathetic) chord struck by the Turtles, whose real attraction seems to be their ability to be all things to all people under the age of 16. Goodman and

Laird, the American duo responsible for unleashing Turtlemania upon the World, could never have dreamed of the success that such unlikely characters would bring.

Placed in the sweaty palms of the marketing media,



Platform/ladder action in a warehouse - some turtles cope better than others with split level combat

WIN! WIN! WIN!

All you have to do to be one of 10 ludicrously lucky winners is to identify 2 products from the Imageworks stable, printed somewhere absolutely inconspicuous on these two pages.

Write your answer on the back of the postcard mounted on the cover (see HELP! box if it was missing) and get it in the post as quickly as possible! The closing date is Friday 5th October, so don't delay!



"Cowabunga!"

Leonardo

THE PRIZES

The senders of the first ten correct answers will each win themselves £100 worth of Turtles and Imageworks products. Free software, T-shirts, and other gifts could soon be piling through your door - get your entry in now!



Turtle traumas on the Amiga version, adding decent 16-bit presentation to the basic scenario

and possibly encouraged by the massive success of Nintendo's Mario Bros; Raphael, Donatello, Michaelangelo and Leonardo (in addition to a host of other involved characters) have spawned literally hundreds of spin-offs, from cereals to video games. This ball may stop rolling one day, but not until it's made the fortunes of a very large number of people.

THE GAME

Licensed to Mirrorsoft, published by Imageworks, and programmed by Probe Software, *Teenage Mutant Hero (forget that naughty Ninja word) Turtles* is due for a November release, alongside the national cinema premier.

Although they're keeping things close to their chest, Mirrorsoft intend to improve upon the original graphic/arcade adventure licensed from Ultra/Konami and first seen on the Nintendo (and first reviewed, in the UK, here in ACE). It seems pretty certain, however, that there are going to be some similarities ('Coincidental', Probe assure us) between the original version and the UK one. Which isn't necessarily too bad because, as licenses go, this one had a goodly dose of gameplay, featuring primitive RPG elements that allowed you to switch control between the four mutant marauders in different situations.

Each turtle displays an aptitude for certain skills – wielding swords, throwing death stars, stabbing lances, and swinging sticks – in their multi-level search for gorgeous girly April, making cadavers of numerous baddies along the way.

So far both 8-bit and 16-bit versions are looking pretty good, with the 8-bit versions showing some particularly impressive graphics. Already well known for their excellent original product, *Xenon 2* and *Cadaver* for example, Imageworks look as if they may have a sexier little number here than one might expect. How the final product plays obviously remains to be seen, but with the current buzz, TMHT looks set to be the obvious Christmas number one.



One of the excellent Imageworks titles – guess what game this comes from and enter the name as the answer to question number one on your card.



Another Imageworks product! Guess what game this comes from and enter the title as the answer to question number two on your card.

SHREDDY CASH

Although as yet unreleased in the UK, the movie alone is currently the largest grossing film in the Variety Magazine box office report (top 50), taking \$132,180,845 during its current run. That works out at a staggering figure of just under one million dollars per day!

COMPETITION RULES

1. The closing date for the competition will be Friday the 5th of October.
2. Multiple entries ARE permitted, but photocopied entry forms will NOT be accepted.
3. The competition is NOT open to anyone associated with either Mirrorsoft or Emap Images.

HELP!

If your entry cardform was missing from the front of this month's issue, you can send us an entry on a normal postcard. Put your answers to the two questions, your name and address, plus your T-shirt size (S/M/L), your age and the machine you own. Post the entry to ACE Turtles Competition, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU.

Note that the cardform also included a £1 discount voucher from Imageworks for entry to the Computer Entertainment Show (15th/16th September). If it was missing, you can use the one printed BELOW – but please note that you can only use ONE voucher per person.

The Computer Entertainment Show promises to be the greatest games event of 1990, and Imageworks are delighted to offer you a special £1 reduction off the usual entrance fee of £5. Just present this voucher when you turn up at the show and you'll save some cash towards your next game!

The coupon is valid only for the public days of the Show – Saturday/Sunday 15th/16th September 1990. Admission times 9.00am to 6.00pm. The venue is the Earls Court exhibition hall.

Please note:

- This coupon must be surrendered at the time of ticket purchase to qualify for discount. Only one coupon per person. Photocopies not admissible.
- The organisers (EMAP International Exhibitions plc) reserve the right to refuse admission. Laws relating to public health and safety at any large public event may necessitate a restriction on entry, so access cannot be guaranteed.

**FREE
£1
OFF**

**Admission to the
Computer
Entertainment Show
from Imageworks**

**"THE GREATEST SHOW
ON EARTH"**

The Definitive Simulation of Armoured Land Combat

M1

TANK PLATOON

Available for IBM PC Compatibles and coming soon for
Atari ST and Commodore Amiga



MICRO PROSE™
SIMULATION • SOFTWARE

Four M1 Abrams Tanks. Four soldiers in each. That's Four Tanks, Sixteen Men. And you control the whole shooting match.

M1 TANK PLATOON



• **Leadership.** Each of the 16 men in your tank platoon has his own battlefield skills and abilities. Improving with experience, promotion and decorations, your chances of success increase as your platoon become battle hardened.



IBM SCREEN SHOTS SHOWN. ACTUAL SHOTS MAY VARY



• **Strategic and tactical command.** Plan your winning strategies, giving orders to your platoon of tanks, calling in airstrikes and artillery. At any moment you can 'jump' into the thick of the action, taking over direct control, as commander, gunner or driver of any tank.

• **Realistic Battlefield terrain.** Make use of natural cover, such as hills, ridges and buildings to hide your tanks, across the huge 16,000 acre 3-D battle zone, just like a real tank commander.

• **High-tech war.** Laser rangefinders, depleted uranium penetrators, wire-guided missiles, reactive armour, air support and artillery make M1 Tank Platoon the most comprehensive, up-to-date simulation of armoured land warfare available for your home computer.

M1 Tank Platoon was released for IBM PC compatible machines in October 1989;

"MicroProse has surely excelled on this one: it's all there, from superb playability through great attention to detail to one of the best manuals I've seen in a long time. The competition should watch out, as this one's going to take some beating." ***** PC Leisure Spring '90

"I can't really fault M1 Tank Platoon as it's definitely MicroProse's most comprehensive simulation yet." 87% C&VG Nov '89

"The most frighteningly accurate tank sim we've seen." 926 Ace Dec '89



• **Endless variety.** Fight during the day, at night, in snow, mud, rain or clear weather. With thousands of battlefields and millions of situations and you get endless enjoyment. Decide between single battles or an entire campaign.



HE'S BACK... TO PROTECT THE INNOCENT



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EVEN IN THE FUTURE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT, THERE'S ALWAYS ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

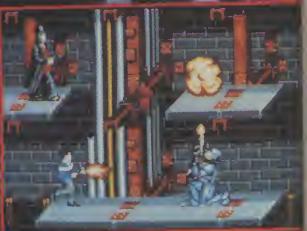
The future is a rough place, Detroit is a bankrupt city... torn apart by the decadent forces of the Old Man and his corrupt corporation. If you want to die - then walk the streets, if you want to live - then pray for the return of RoboCop!

ROBOCOP 2 has justice in mind... a kind of justice only he can deliver!

Take on Detroit's evil mastermind and his mega-corporation in some of the most action-packed scenes ever devised for maximum entertainment value. DETROIT IS FALLING APART - IT'S TIME TO PUT IT ALL BACK TOGETHER!

**AMSTRAD • SPECTRUM • COMMODORE
ATARI ST • CBM AMIGA**

ocean



A grandfather and grandson are chatting about the 'Good Old Days'. Grandfather is, as usual, doing most of the talking...

"The year 1990? Of course I remember it, my boy. That was the year of the ... um ... er ... just let me check the diary. (Speaks to diary card.) 'Diary, list major events of 1990'. Ah, here we go, just searching its memory banks. Get a new diary? But why? It's too big? No thank you, I'm perfectly happy with the credit card size and besides, I'm too old for all this subcutaneous implant, direct cerebral input business. (Diary begins to display the requested information.) Right, it says here ... 'Mike Tyson defeated, Nelson Mandela released, Iraqi Gulf Crisis resolved by Pygmies and ... oh yes ... the first Computer Entertainment Show...'

"What? Yes, that's right, the first! Well, all oaks grow from small acorns, you know. Hard to believe the biggest inter-planetary entertainment software show was once confined to one small four dimensional building in Earls Court. Oh, it's all flooding back now - the lights, the glamour, the heat, the stars. Dame Betty Boo was there, you know, though she was a mere slip of a girl then.

THE GAMES...THE GLORY

"Games were a lot different then, too. They took place on crude 2D bitmapped videoscreens, with only about 16 or 32 colours used at once - a far cry from the four-wall high-definition holoscreens you've got in your gameroom. What sort of games? Oh, shoot-'em-ups, platform games, graphic adventures (come on, you remember, I showed them to you in the Museum of Leisure on Mars and you said they were 'quaint'). Nearest you got to the sort of games we get today were films, but they weren't interactive and the outcome was fixed. Yeah, similar to story implants, but without the emotion centre stimulators.

"The amount of involvement possible in these games was limited by the method of interaction. In those days they only had a joystick, a mouse or a keyboard, nothing like the neural link and body sensors in your gameroom. And the only feedback you got was via your eyes and ears, no electronically-induced nerve manipulation. Oh no, if your spaceship crashed then all you got was a flash and a bang, none of that ghastly Syntho-pain® you get nowadays.

"What? Interact with artificial personality constructs? Of course you couldn't! Computers had nowhere near the speed or memory storage for that sort of realism. No, back then the first CD-I machines were only just starting to appear. They were slow, and the very first machines had problems with pulling data from storage onto screen, so the games, albeit of greater depth, tended to consist of still frames with music, rather than the full motion video you get today. And the interaction was still primitive, although developers were researching into movement sensors, control gloves and speech recognition.

THE MARCH OF PROGRESS

"As I remember, things really started buzzing in the '90s. And I guess it all started at that first CES show. Take interactive CD, for example, shown in the...what was it? Oh yes, the Living Room of the Future exhibit done by ACE magazine (still around, you know, they've just bought up Max-Murd Inc). Eventually those CD things achieved the speed for full motion video while manipulating sound and game data, and things really began to take off. With high-definition TV becoming popular, gamers began to experience the full realism potential of

those game systems. Oh, I can remember the adrenalin rush even now - we'd never seen anything like them, a total audio/visual experience. They blew away everything that had gone before. Game production became more like film production, with script writers, researchers, directors, and so on.

The following years, just after you were born, saw the advent of ... Oh but sorry, I'm beginning to sound like your learning centre. You'll have to stop me if I start to lecture. You know all about the rest, of course, because you use it every day. So, where did we start? Ah yes, the Computer Entertainment Show! You know, I was a sceptical little tyke then. I remember walking around that ACE Living Room of the Future and thinking that none of what was on show could ever really take off. How wrong I was!

"These self-developing ultra-violet prints are great stuff."

Buck Rogers strip forecasting the development of the Polaroid (eventually produced 1970) in 1929

The future-LIVE!



exhibit done by ACE magazine (still around, you know, they've just bought up Max-Murd Inc). Eventually those CD things achieved the speed for full motion video while manipulating sound and game data, and things really began to take off. With high-definition TV becoming popular, gamers began to experience the full realism potential of

Futures present

All our tomorrows today at CES. Here's a quick roundup of futureshox that could gladden your eyes at the Show on the 15th and 16th of September...plus a fond look back at futures past...

- The US Gold stand will be hosting the International



Live for speed...Gremlin's Lotus Esprit license roars into action at CES

LIVE THAT ROOM!

ACE's exhibit at the CES gives you the chance to see demonstrations of some of the hottest new developments from major companies in Britain and the World. Information panels on the walls of the Living Room of the Future will explain how the technology on show will apply to YOU in years to come, and there'll be actual demonstrations and models featuring tomorrow's technology. The Room will concentrate on the following five main topics:

- Interactive CD – It's something ACE has been championing for a long time now, and you may be wondering what all the fuss is about. Come along and understand why we're excited about it and why you should be too!
- Communications – Could we ever have Dungeon Master played over the 'phone lines, with interaction between players? Find out about the exciting possibilities of high-band width telephones and other aspects of the communications revolution.
- Cyberspace – You've read the books, now experience the reality. Learn how the man-machine interface will be revolutionised with the advent of biofeedback and speech recognition and the truth about alternate realities.
- Interactive TV – Ever been frustrated by your inability to participate in a TV debate? Soon you may be able to and, combined with high-definition TV, you'll feel like you're actually in the studio with the guests!

- Home workstations
- Imagine a future where you'll never have to leave home to go to work. Discover how your car will be able to tell you how to get from A to B, and avoid any nasty roadworks. And you'll be able to get your face on the cover of ACE! Find out more on the day – and don't miss it whatever you do.



Plans for the Living Room of the Future stand at the Show. Enter the Future and be amazed!

Games Championship, where crack gameplayers from Japan, France, Germany, Italy and the UK will pit their skills against other in the ultimate test. Forget the disappointment of the World Cup – this is what our national pride is riding on (and we've got more chance of winning)!

- Gremlin will be running the Lotus Esprit Turbo Challenge to promote their new game of the same name. The action will take place on a huge video wall and contestants will sit in purpose-built Lotus seats. Autofans can ogle a real Lotus Esprit on display, as well as a Suzuki racing bike to promote the new Team Suzuki game.
- Derek Bell, the motor-racing marvel, will be applying his track-honed driving skills to a wide range of computer racing simulations.
- Those who feel like testing their gameplaying mettle should make their way to the Virgin Mastertronic stand where, for a small fee that will be given to the Childline charity, you can play a head to head with the winner of last years Sega Challenge.
- Fans of Brookside and EastEnders will have the opportunity to see which programme employs the best gamesters as members of the casts compete in a computer challenge.
- There will be the chance to have your photo taken with one of the galaxy of stars visiting the show.
- Turtles fans will no doubt be queuing around the ACE stand in their millions, because the beshelled foursome, courtesy of Mirrortsoft, will be there IN PERSON (gosh!) to personally sign copies of the magazine. (Careful with that nunchaku, madam.)
- There'll be a Karaoke (the Japanese singalonga backing tape) competition, with a special video introduction from pop 'sensations' Wet Wet Wet. All proceeds will again be going to Childline.
- You've read about it, now experience the reality. Take Microprose's F-15 Strike Eagle arcade flight sim for a spin; it'll be on freeplay all day at their stand.
- All through the weekend there'll be a variety of musical acts. Kiss FM, one of London's newest radio station, will be presenting some scratch DJs who will amaze you with their turntable prowess and Jazz Amiga, sponsored by Commodore, will be having jamming sessions.
- Of course, there will be a host of new hardware and software products on display. The ACE tips for the big hits of the show in these two departments? The official UK release of the Sega Megadrive from Virgin Mastertronic and the remarkable Powermonger from Electronic Arts.

POWER GLOVE



The Power Glove: just one example of the developments in man-machine interfaces that you can find out more about in the Living Room of the Future...

YOU DIDN'T MISS IT BECAUSE IT WASN'T THERE!

Here are a few of the things that you WON'T be seeing at this years Computer Entertainment Show:

- Commodore CD-TV – This could be the product to start the CD-I revolution, but not if we never see one! Commodore are holding it back for the trade. Shame!
- Damocles – Novagen's follow up to Merc... oops, sorry, this is actually out now!
- The rumoured ZX81 console, with its powerful monochrome display and state-of-the-art BEEP chip, will now apparently stay just that – a rumour. Yet another missed chance for the nascent UK console business.
- ...more absent friends opposite...

...and futures past!

Science Fiction has been trying to put people into the Living Room of the Future for decades, but it's surprising how few books or films actually portray a radically different yet believable and practical future.

The typical manner in which the future is depicted is to take contemporary characters and locations then 'bolt on' futuristic devices, which give the stories a veneer of propheticism yet present the reader with situations that are easily recognisable from real life.

This trend started way back in the last century with Jules Verne (i.e. the Nautilus in Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea). The novels of the Golden Age of Science Fiction in the 30s and 40s were rife with this phenomenon – no matter how many ray-guns, giant spaceships, aliens

and robots were crammed in a story, the situations were still recognisable (and generally interchangeable with Cowboy stories).

When people did make the effort to think seriously about the future, the results tended to be bleak. Good examples of these pessimistic visions are Fritz Lang's classic 1926 film *Metropolis* – in which people, rather than being liberated by technology, became its slaves, toiling all day in mindless labour simply to keep a huge city running – and George Orwell's novel *1984* (1948), which portrayed a dystopia where every living room is fitted with a huge TV screen that couldn't be turned off and which is used by the fascist State to spout propaganda and spy on the populace.

FUTURE PARANOIA

In the 50s and early 60s the development of the atomic bomb and fear of Communism lead to a growth in paranoid fantasies populated by overgrown natural fauna or bug-eyed monsters. Mankind, it seemed, was too busy fighting for its very survival to worry about the future.

At this point, special mention should be made of the author Ray Bradbury, who had several interesting ideas of how the media would impact on our lives long before even TV was fully established. In *Fahrenheit 451* (1951), the protagonist's wife spends all day in a room made of four giant TV screens, soaking in mind-numbing soap operas pumped out by the State to keep the population docile.

Even more interesting was the short story *The Veldt*, collected in the anthology *The Illustrated Man*, which proposed a children's playroom that simulated any environment, such as a medieval castle or, as the title suggests,



...AND MORE ABSENT FRIENDS...

• The PC Engine – shelved by NEC until the second quarter of 1991 – and at that rate we may never see it.

• *Ramrod*, Gremlin's 3D isometric arcade game, was previewed in ACE issue ONE! It's still officially 'in production'!

an African veldt. In a similar way to which experts think current multi media devices could develop, this simulation could be walked around and interacted with totally, just like reality. In fact, it was so real that, in a technophobic twist typical of the times, the simulated lions of the veldt killed people!

Following the Vietnam War, the dystopia theme was explored again in films such as *THX 1138* (directed by George 'Star Wars' Lucas), *Alphaville* and *Logan's Run*, amongst many others. A more optimistic view was given by Stanley Kubrick's 1968 film *2001 – A Space Odyssey*. These films are typical of the futures popular around the late 60s and 70s, where people wander around white, anti-septic, plastic rooms wearing awful one-piece suits.

So many of these visions of the future are way off the mark, generally underestimating the current technological rat-race. For example, in the 30s, 40s and 50s, many writers didn't think that there'd be a man on the moon until the next century, yet the combination of World War II and the Cold War encouraged rapid research and human feet touched lunar soil in 1969. Likewise, no-one foresaw the incredible information and communication explosion produced by the development of the silicon chip.

The ramifications of this boom have still to penetrate the majority of SF. In particular, the films still stick to the old scenarios/new technology formula. Even *Bladerunner* (1982), which is widely regarded as a 'realistic' view of the future, hardly acknowledges the impact that computer technology will have on us all. O.K., there's a two-way TV 'phone and a hologram viewer, but these ideas are not exactly new. In essence, the film is a 40s detective drama with flying cars.

More recently, *Total Recall* (1990) had the neat idea of artificial memory implants, and Schwarzenegger's living room had wall-size TV and a clever holographic tennis tutor, but it's still a future we can all recognise from now.

CYBERPUNK

The most interesting and plausible ideas of how things may go are provided by such authors as William Gibson and Bruce Sterling, leaders of the Cyberpunk movement. In the Cyberpunk future, the concepts of artificial realities and personalities, computer/human neural links, and societies where information is more important than money, are explored in depth.

But who's to say that these views, which currently seem quite probable, won't look as quaint and dated as those that went before. There may be a revolution in technology just around the corner that no-one can foresee, but you can be sure of one thing – if there is and it affects you, you'll read about it first in ACE!

GIMME IMME

How far are we from the Cyberspace dream? Not far, if Nolan Bushnell is to be believed (as reported exclusively in ACE 35) – he's already working on a consumer virtual reality product. One of the biggest problems to overcome will be that of human/computer interfacing. It's all very well have cinema quality visuals and CD sound, but how can you become totally engrossed if you're still having to click on menus with the mouse pointer or twist a joystick about? The machine's limitations are still getting in the way of the experience.

This could all change in the near future. Research and development companies across the World are already producing prototype speech recognition units which, although fairly primitive now, will improve. More immediately, remote control methods have already been seen, such as the Mattel Power Glove and Broderbund's U Force (both reported way back in ACE 23). When worn these gloves can be used to control on-screen events by simple movement of the arm.

The potential for these devices is already huge; you could actually press buttons or open doors in a game without being anywhere near the computer or the TV. If this could be combined with some sort of tactile feedback, so that you could actually feel the doorhandle as you turned it, the first true steps to virtual reality would be here. However, such a device would be highly complex, and is not going to be around for quite a while.

DANCE THAT VIDEO
Another device with Cyberspace possi-

bilities is the IMME (Interactive Multi Media Engine – reported in ACE 31). Basically consisting of a room lined with motion sensors, visual and audio events on four video screens are triggered by the movement of anybody in the room. Although currently just a collage of various images and sounds, the possibilities are incredible. Combine it with some sort of treadmill and you could walk around an artificial environment, interacting with it. Add sensor gloves with feedback and advanced speech recognition and the fantasy of Cyberspace would become a reality.

Interested in experiencing the birth of Cyberspace? Who isn't? ACE will have the IMME in the 'Living Room of the Future' and you will be able to sample its delights. Believe us, it's an experience you shouldn't miss!



An illustration of the kind of images thrown out by the incredible IMME system, which is sure to be one of the big crowd pullers at the Show.

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Screen Shots from the Amiga version

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Power ...to our people!

Next month's ACE pulls no punches as we give our readers the ultimate games experience. Knowledge is power, friends, and with issue 38 you'll be putting on gaming muscle like there's no tomorrow...But there is, and here it comes...

First we'll be taking you from 1990 CES through to the year 2000 with the plans and future products of some of the world's biggest software companies. If you want to find out what you'll be playing in 2000AD, this is where you'll find out.

But that's not all. We're also bringing you:

- the low-down on MINDWARE – a new development featuring hardware and software for the BRAIN. Mark Healey will be bringing you the low down on a series of technological developments that are leading to the construction of unique Mind Gymnasium in London. Find out all about in issue 38.
- on-the-spot report from Millenium, featuring interviews with the programmers and designers of Resolution 101 and Archipelagos, to name but two. Plus the chance to find out about their latest projects – a futuristic sports game that combines competition with Resolution 101 graphics handling and a very weird sounding title that has you taking on the spirit of a North American Indian.
- The Chris Crawford Story. The programmer of Eastern Front, Balance of Power, Balance of the Planet, and Guns and Butter has had an enormous influence on gaming styles and coding. John Cook delivers the definitive ACE analysis of a major figure in games development.
- On the spot reports from the States and Japan, including

news from the CyberArts International conference in Los Angeles. You'll be able to find out about emerging interactive and multimedia technologies and their applications in the entertainment world, including holography, laser interactivity, and algorithmic art.

● *Wingleader* – a major exclusive review of the game that we previewed in issue 35. Recently renamed *Wing Commander*, it promises an incredible combination of 3D graphics and arcade gameplay. We've seen these routines in action for ourselves in the US and believe us, they're something else again.

● All the early autumn releases including *Rick Dangerous 2* and *Powermonger*...This month is going to be BIG.

● The biggest competition we've EVER mounted. We're not giving anything away except to say that for the first time EVERY reader will WIN! If you want to take part in the largest software prize bonanza of all time, reserve your copy now!

**HAND THIS FORM
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"Curly, if you want to be man, you've got to read this magazine"

John Waine (no relation)



Wingleader – now Wing Commander – looking mean in the ACE preview – and we mean to give it to you on the page next month

DEAR NEWSAGENT,

As a sophisticated user of highly complex electronic equipment for entertainment purposes, I want the chance to partake in ACE's largest competition ever. Please reserve for me a copy of the November issue of ACE magazine (Advanced Computer Entertainment), due out on Thursday October 4th. I shall be everlastingly grateful (and possibly rich).

My name.....

My address.....

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rest and have been quietly plotting a
cataclysmic return to power! Their goal:
nothing short of establishing the Dark Queen,
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Takhisis,
Queen of
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and her Draconian hordes
have overrun much of the homeland of
Krynn. Even the elven armies of Qualinost, valiant in their
resistance of this evil power, struggle on the edge of defeat.
Heroes of the Lance come forward ... or Krynn will
forever be consumed by evil!



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THE ACE PROMISE

1. ACE is DIFFERENT

Unlike many magazines, ACE ONLY reviews finished games. If it's reviewed here, it's what you'll get in the shops. If there's any exception to this rule, the page will clearly be marked PREVIEW and the game is not rated. We won't let you down by reviewing half-finished versions and demos. And to give you even better coverage, this month we've introduced the ACE Preplay feature. See opposite for full details.

2. ACE is DEFINITIVE

Every game has been extensively tested. If we come across bugs or other deficiencies, we check immediately with the company concerned. Then we give you the whole story. Whenever possible, we'll give you more than just the review – analysis, comparison, and technical information is all included wherever possible.

3. ACE is DEPENDABLE

All ratings are carefully calculated. You can rely on them to make your buying decisions. Not only do we insist on reviewing finished versions (see above), but we also make sure that all ratings are checked by the ACE reviewing staff. We GRILL those games!



The packaging and presentation are mediocre, but after a few minutes the depth of gameplay really bites. Unfortunately a repetitive challenge means it's down-hill from there on...

PIC POWER!

The PIC – Predicted Interest Curve – is the most sophisticated reviewing tool around.

We on ACE know you don't just play a game – you experience it. The Predicted Interest Curve is the only review system that takes this all-important factor into account.

The curve is divided into six sections, indicating the player's adrenalin level after one minute, one hour, one day, one week, one month, and one year. And this can tell you a lot more about a game than just the interest levels...

For example, a high one minute rating means that the game must look fantastic and get you all excited from the word go. That means it's probably a good game to show off to the neighbours – who probably aren't going to pay attention for much more than a minute anyway.

The minute, hour, and day ratings can tell you a lot too. If there's a dip here, followed by a rise, you've got a game that may take a bit of getting into. Alternatively, the graphics may put you off for a while until the gameplay starts to grip. Check out the PIC comment for more details.

Finally, you've got the month and year ratings. The better a game holds up here the more deserving it is of your hard-earned cash.

SCREEN

Welcome to the ULTIMATE GAMES GUIDE

This month's section is even bigger and better than ever.

● Bigger, because we've brought you more games, ranging from the superlative *Powermonger* to the ludicrous *Monty Python*.

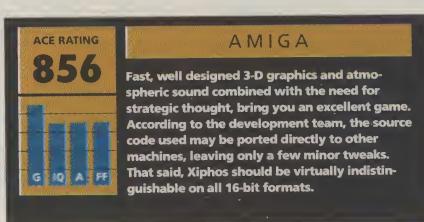
● Better, because in our never-ending search for the perfect reviews section, this month we've introduced two new improvements: the ACE Preplay feature now keeps you right up to date with the latest product – see the page opposite for full details. And we've redesigned the ratings boxes to save space – space we use to tell you even more about the game.

And don't forget – ACE is the only magazine with regular review sections for computers, consoles, and CDs, giving you complete coverage of games today – and tomorrow.

ACE RATED!

Question: Is this game really going to grab me? And for how long?

Answer: the PIC curve – the heart of the **ACE Rating System**.



Each review carries a PIC Curve (see Pic Power panel) and special 'Version Boxes' that give you details of the game's implementation on a specific machine. These boxes include ratings out of ten for...

GRAPHICS

All aspects of the game's graphics – with the limitations of each machine taken into account.

AUDIO

The music and sound effects are rated here. A high rating is possible on even limited machines like the Spectrum and PC if the computer's shortcomings are cleverly sidestepped.

IQ FACTOR

The Brain Strain rating. Note that ACE readers are generally reckoned to be more intelligent than other human beings, so the ratings may be lower than you expect...

FUN FACTOR

Basically a measure of mindless addictiveness. Games like *Arkanoid* and *Flying Shark* require virtually zero brain power but are still remarkably addictive. Most coin-ops score well here because they are designed for instant satisfaction. Games don't have to be either fun or intelligent – they can be both.

ACE RATING

To get a really high rating a game will not only have to be very addictive but stand the test of time as well. Here's a general guide to what the ratings mean:

900+ A classic game, recommended without reservation.

800-899 A superb game, but perhaps lacking the long-term depth to last into the month and year categories.

700-799 Still recommended, but probably has a couple of aspects to the gameplay that take the edge off it.

600-699 The 'fair' zone, where it tends to be OK 'if you like that sort of thing'.

500-599 Not recommended. The game clearly has some noticeable problems.

400-499 Problems with gameplay and programming make this an inferior product.

300-399 Not only is the gameplay bad but the design is also seriously flawed. Very avoidable.

200-299 Things are getting really heavy now... Might be funny if you weren't expected to pay for it.

100-199 Inferior ZX81 games running on an Amiga.

Under 100 An essential purchase due to rarity value and unparalleled degrees of awfulness.

VERSION BOXES

This covers version-specific information on graphics, audio, loading problems etc. If there's no box for your machine but a version is planned, it'll be covered as an update in a later issue.

TEST

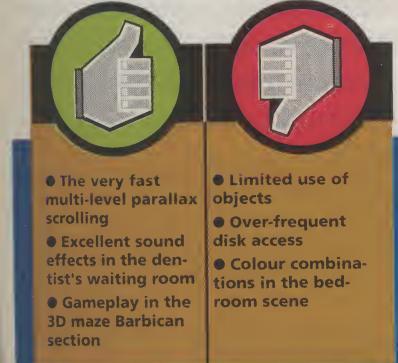
ABSENT FRIENDS...

Not every game makes it into *Screentest* each month. Naturally we have to pick and choose, making sure that we bring you the widest possible selection. Sometimes this causes us a good deal of grief, particularly when we feel that for reasons of space we have to leave out a game that deserves more exposure. Usually – as in the case of *UMS2* below – this is because we have given the program an extensive pre-production playtest in a recent issue, and the final version differs so slightly from the previous one that there's nothing more to add except the final seal of approval (or disapproval) in the form of an ACE rating. And sometimes we leave them out because we just can't bear to put them in!



UMS2 – previewed in issue 35 – is every bit as good as we hoped it would be. A must for wargame aficionados, the new version has sensibly put functionality before appearance. For example, you no longer get those 'state of the art' 3D views of the battlefield (which were actually a bit of a drag and obscured your view). Out now at £24.99 for 16-bits and ACE rated at 91.

BACK TO THE FUTURE II – Let's hope the next *BTTF* game improves on its predecessors. *BTTFII* is a bit of a disappointment. Frankly, we felt that we could make better use of space this month by telling you about Imageworks' vastly preferable *Cadaver* than by cataloguing the failings of this little number. Expect to see it selling by the thousand despite limited gameplay, repetitive levels, a very poor puzzle section, and a charmless beat-em-up interlude.



- The very fast multi-level parallax scrolling
- Excellent sound effects in the dentist's waiting room
- Gameplay in the 3D maze Barbican section

- Limited use of objects
- Over-frequent disk access
- Colour combinations in the bedroom scene

INTRODUCING... ACE PREPLAY

You now know how we feel about reviewing unfinished games. Unlike some other magazines, we won't rate a game unless we're 100% convinced that it represents what you'll find on the shelves. In the past this has meant that we've been able to keep you better informed than our competitors – we were the only magazine, for example, that mentioned the dreaded word 'bug' in our review of *F29 Retaliator*.

Up until now, games that haven't been finished have been covered by us as *Previews* – either as features (see the Digital Image Design feature on *Retaliator II* in this issue, for example)

or as *Previews* within *Screentest* itself (indicated by the word *Preview* at the top of the page). We've now taken the *Preview* idea one step further and introduced **ACE Preplays** – games that aren't finished but are sufficiently playable for us to form opinions as to what could be done to improve them and where they show real promise.

To do this, we've introduced the ACE Preplay verdict panel. You'll find a couple of these in this month's *Screentest*. In each case, they accompany a game which we feel needs more than just a description of the scenario. And, of course, we'll make sure that the programming teams hear what goes into the panel, so that they can (if they agree) make some modifications to the game.

There's just one bug in the lettuce! The panel design wasn't ready until quite late in the schedule for this month's issue, so you'll find that some Preplay titles still have 'Preview' at the top of the page. From next month, however, Preplay will be a fully integrated and permanent feature of the *Screentest* scene...

ACE AWARDS

ACE always awards seals of approval for outstanding software performance. If a game really breaks the boundaries in sound, graphics, or originality you'll see the appropriate ACE Award flash on the review. Unless it's truly dire – in which case it'll get the ACE Turkey award. Software houses: you have been warned!



ACE only awards this one to games of outstanding quality. A 900+ game is a classic title, recommended with-out hesitation.



Originality counts for a lot these days, and any games that have it deserve a special mention. This ACE award is reserved specifically for these rare games.



One of the first things to grab you in a game is its graphics. Games that redefine the state-of-the-art get this seal of approval from ACE.



Sound is the 'forgotten' aspect of games – but can make or break them. ACE only awards this one to brilliant use of audio in a game.

THE LINE-UP

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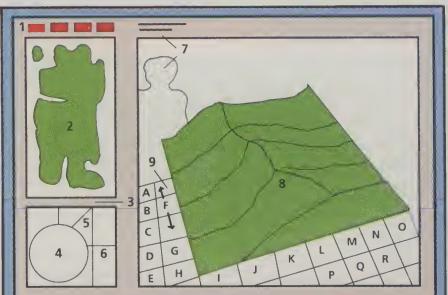
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POWERMONGER SCREEN KEY

- 1: Allows player to click between contour, political, landscape and people maps.
- 2: The map currently selected, landscape in this case. Your leader can be clearly seen, with your men shown as white pixels. The white cross indicates the area in view on the main screen, and can be moved all over the map with simple mouse clicks, allowing you to keep an eye on enemy movements - it's the sort of ability Napoleon would've given his right arm for!
- 3: Messages window.
- 4: The compass. The large arrow always points North, and clicking on the compass points will move you in a direction relative to this.
- 5: Click on these icons to rotate the landscape in either direction.
- 6: These icons allow you to zoom in or out on the main view.
- 7: The Leader of the Pack! The bars above indicate various facets of your current status. When other Captains are recruited, they queue up to the left and just behind the Leader, and can be switched between by clicking on them.
- 8: Your window on the world. The view can be manipulated in just about any way possible, thanks to the flexibility of the polygons used to construct it.
- 9: The few simple icons are the only controls you'll need to get into Powermonger.
- A: Save/load games.



Summer, and a young warlord's thoughts turn to war. Things are looking bad for the humble villagers defending their homes from your savage attack. Note the angels of the fallen rising to heaven.

POWER

If you thought *Populous* was something special, wait ELECTRONIC ARTS latest Bullfrog masterpiece a full the power 59 worlds - if everyone in Britain had creation of time, they'd be polishing off the last one

Bullfrog have long been a software development team to watch. After a relatively unimpressive start with the puzzle cum arcade shoot-'em-up *Fusion*, they really showed that they could compete with the big boys when they released *Populous*. A computer classic of our times, there can be few people who are not familiar with it. The ease of interaction, absorbing gameplay and stunning graphics evoked a real feeling of a world in microcosm occupied by people leading independent lives and generated a level of involvement unknown with most games.

So how do you follow up a computer legend? After a fairly quiet period, the Bullfrogs released *Flood*, a platform game which, although great fun, wasn't really in the same class as *Populous*. But that may just have been the lull before the storm, if the advance preview of their next release is anything to go by.

A few weeks after you read this, Bullfrog, on the Electronic Arts label, will be releasing *Powermonger* for the Atari ST and Amiga. Although comparisons with *Populous* are bound to be made, any similarities are largely superficial.

The player controls a warrior exiled from his homeland and, along with twenty loyal soldiers,

find himself on the shores of a large island, part of a group of 200 making up the 'world'. This is a land that needs a King and who better to wear the crown than yourself? Unfortunately, the residents of the islands don't appreciate your upwardly mobile ambitions, and will do all they can to stop you. Raiding towns and villages will result in the occupants either fighting to the death or being 'persuaded' to become part of your merry band. Once enough people follow your flag, they will make you King. You can then move onto the next island.

Although the early islands are relatively easy and can be won by simply attacking as many natives as quickly as possible, it is only later, when you encounter similarly ambitious opposing leaders or 'Captains' commanding troops armed with superior weaponry and your own followers are collapsing from hunger, that you begin to realise that a little more strategy is required to succeed. It is about then that you also begin to appreciate the depth of the game and the amount of thought that has gone into it.

Defeating one of the Captains puts him in your control; he can then lead an independent faction on your behalf. However, an army marches on its stomach, and these longer campaigns will require that followers are allocated to food pro-



The Bullfrogs: (left-right) Simon Hunter, Glenn Corpes, Sean Cooper, Les Edgar, Peter Molyneux, Kevin Donkin, Andy Tidy, Gary Carr.

MEGA CODE

The boys at Bullfrog have been beavering away at *Powermonger* for the last 13 months, and all that hard work certainly shows. At maximum zoom out, which is only used to get a quick overview of the surroundings, things may seem to move a little sluggishly, but when you consider that the system is processing an incredible 2096 polygons and around 500 sprites you realise the immensity of the technical achievement.

At medium range zoom, the level at which you'll play most of the game, everything zips along – and according to Peter Molyneux of Bullfrog the final version will be even faster, because they've developed a clever piece of code that intelligently allocates processor time to tasks as and when they are needed. Also, the use of space-saving polygons means that approximately 70% of total memory is used up by game logic – it's the largest piece of code that Bullfrog have ever written.



As a counterpoint to all the violence, a shot of simple farmers tending their crops.

Your army takes up camp beside a tiny village as Winter begins to bite. Your leader is the tiny cloaked figure standing by the campfire warming his cockles (ah, the benefits of rank).

200 islands to be conquered, and each island is populated with 512 people with their own jobs and characters.

The Captains all have individual personalities; while a bellicose one will be great for a bit of hard bargaining over trade goods, he may have no idea of how to supervise the invention of a new weapon. Strategy pervades every aspect of the game, and the player must allocate his resources and time wisely.

This may lead you to think that this will all involve remembering hundred of commands and require thousands of key presses. Not so – the game has been designed with ease-of-use as one of the main objectives and, like *Populous*, all actions are governed by just 20 icons. The computer does most of the hard work for you and lets you just get on with playing the game. The islands have been designed so that new features and strategy elements are introduced gradually, allowing the novice to build up his or her proficiency before having to tackle the harder islands.

Of course, this prettier and bigger business is all very nice, but is it as good as *Populous*? Well, the honest answer has to be no – it's far better! In the space available I can only give a brief idea of the things to see and do, and this is still just the preview version! The final version should have several extra features, most importantly the sound effects (which we are promised will be very special on the Amiga) and the ability to spy and besiege villages, and these can only add to an already very exciting piece of software. Look forward to a full in-depth ACE review in the next issue!

● David Upchurch

MONGER

until you get your hands on this! ACE gives playtested preview...*Powermonger* can generate 4 to started working through the worlds since the just about ... now.

duction. You can watch your people as they raise crops, tend cattle, herd sheep or even go fishing in the case of coastal towns. Should two near-by villages have a good year they celebrate by meeting up for a game of baseball - you can take a seat on the bleachers and cheer on your favourite side!

Alternatively you can set a village the task of inventing a new weapon, which could be anything from a bow and arrow to cannons. Naturally, the villagers need raw materials to do this so – say they need wood – they'll march off to the nearest forest and cut down trees. If they need metal ore, they'll set up a mine. You can then equip your men or trade these goods with other villages.

RIVER DEEP, MOUNTAIN HIGH

The graphics, which give an initial impression of *Populous*, are superb. The landscape is vector-graphic based and allows a great deal of flexibility; it can be zoomed in or out on, rotated, tilted and expanded to fill the screen to your own taste. The buildings and people are bitmapped graphics that grow or shrink but don't rotate – although this isn't noticeable during play.

This flexibility has allowed Bullfrog to reproduce a huge number of natural phenomena in the

game. Just about every geological or geographical feature is present: there are plains, deserts, hills, mountains, rivers, valleys, waterfalls and forests; it rains and the seasons change, which is reflected graphically by specks of snow appearing on the ground and the trees losing their leaves as the world turns to winter.

These features, clever as they are, are not there just for cleverness' sake. Attack a hillside town from the slope and they'll see you coming from miles off and prepare defences, but attack from over the brow of the hill and you'll have the advantage of surprise. Make people attack in snowy weather and they'll not only eat more food, they may get lost or fed up and desert.

BIG IS BEAUTIFUL

One of the most breathtaking aspects of the game is its sheer size and scope. The game universe is huge (see box); each 'world' consists of



Never get complacent in *Powermonger* – enemy forces are always growing. Here they're sweeping through one of the larger towns in the South.

RELEASE DETAILS		
ATARI ST/STE	£24.99	IMMINENT
AMIGA	£24.99	IMMINENT
IBM PC	£29.99	IMMINENT
No other versions planned		

- Incredible, realistic, interactive 'world' absorbs the player into the action.
- Huge and very enjoyable task with the difficulty scaled so that players can learn as they play.
- Highly flexible play-field viewing system that can be customised to the player's wishes
- The game won't appeal to the straight slash 'n' shoot arcade fan with a three minute attention span.
- Graphics slow down at maximum zoom out, but this scale is only needed rarely.
- The game has too few bad points to fill the space available



The serene setting for a Xiphon temple – about to be blown away!

This space epic – and big Christmas hope for the ELECTRONIC ZOO stable – bears more than a striking resemblance to *Elite*. Does it live up to its famous ancestor?

XIPHOS

Civil war has broken out in the Xiphon system and you must traverse five Universes, trading with bases along the way and maintaining good relations with both sides, in your search for a sixth, central Universe and the cause of the conflict.

Control of your ship on this vast journey is best achieved via mouse buttons

– used to advance and reverse – although the cursor keys provide an alternative. Firing uses the function keys (each of the first five emit a different weapon of successive capability). While this may seem an illogical choice, it allows the player the speed of movement necessary to react to rapidly changing situations – of which there are many.

Remaining controls allow operation of a docking beacon, map, identification reports and information. The latter two functions are incredibly useful within a game of this speed and type. Operating the ID function places a box around anything within your viewing range. In the instance of more than one object being present, repeated pressing cycles through until boxing the object of your choice. Once boxed, pressing F10 displays information on the object allowing you to decide what course of action to take.



One of the many gargantuan structures to be found in Xiphos – an orbiting space station

TACTICS AND GAMEPLAY

There are no strict guidelines as to the method of play open to you. Due to the enormity of the Xiphon system (there are 120 bases in level one alone), a map may be accessed by which you can keep track of your co-ordinates. Initially blank, information must be purchased or bases visited to register on the map. Unusually, displaying the map does not halt the action, but is superimposed over it. This often leads to your ship being unsuspectingly fired upon while routing your course.

The game allows you a free hand to roam through space, discovering various strategies, (such as involving yourself in battles, politics or mercenary activities), although it is inevitable that you will at some point dock with a base to replenish diminished resources or buy information to further your own causes. Any resources purchased rely on you shooting down ships to gain credits.

Each base you visit belongs to one of the two warring factions and entry depends very much upon your tactics. Shooting down a ship and then entering a base of the same faction can be somewhat hazardous! If the base in question acknowledges your docking beacon, you are dragged in by tractor beam (as opposed to the *Elite* docking system) when you may begin to converse. Conversation enables you to determine the nature of your location, which could be anything from a religious institution to a restaurant!

Attempting to offer a base credits belonging to the same faction or leaving without paying for services will result in your immediate rejection and attempted destruction, although it is possible to barter prices to a certain degree. Cash reserves are vital – charges are often incurred

SPACE SIMULA

The system used to generate the impressively fast 3-D graphics (known as "Simula"), took around 2 years to develop. Being a C-based graphics-language, Simula allows artists with relatively little programming knowledge a free-hand to design and co-ordinate complex polygon-based graphics. SPA, the development team responsible for Xiphos, are confident that future releases will make use of the system, and that its possibilities far outweigh any other 3-D system so far.



The Amiga version of Xiphos is aesthetically excellent. Fast, well designed 3-D graphics and atmospheric sound coupled with the need for strategic thought, combine to bring you a game which provides both initial and long-term interest. Once running, disk access is confined to loading levels and, due to the size of each Universe, this does not detract from the game. Firmly in the space trading genre, Xiphos has nothing radically new to offer, however, and this just robs it of an ACE rating.

ACE RATING

856



AMIGA

Fast, well designed 3-D graphics and atmospheric sound combined with the need for strategic thought, bring you an excellent game. According to the development team, the source code used may be ported directly to other machines, leaving only a few minor tweaks. That said, Xiphos should be virtually indistinguishable on all 16-bit formats.

RELEASE DETAILS

ATARI ST	£24.99d	OCTOBER
AMIGA	£24.99d	OCTOBER
IBM PC	£24.99d	OCTOBER

No other versions planned

merely for landing, and even saving a game in progress costs credits! Occasionally however, it may be that a base divulges information useful to you, or even offers you the chance to run a mercenary errand against the opposition.

POLE POSITION

Traversing between Universes involves discovery of the Pole base. Once found, you must be successfully admitted before being spewed out into the adjoining Universe. Travel is limited to one direction however. Co-ordinates leading to the Pole base may be purchased. Alternatively you may be assisted by small creatures known as Wanderers who are quite willing to lead you to the Pole and whom you must protect from possible attack.

The "Simula" system creates an excellent deep space environment with incredibly fast, well designed graphics conveying as much realism as is possible in a completely unknown environment. Although the initial concept may smack of *Elite*, the option of a practice or "Raid" mode allows arcade freaks to blast to their hearts' content, whilst those looking for something more in-depth have a vast challenge on their hands.

Xiphos is an excellent example of a contemporary space trading game. Let's hope the Simula system is used to produce software of similar quality in the future.

● Alex Ruranski

ELITE ON THE WANE?

Elite generated a whole genre of space trading scenarios that has kept discriminating gamesters busy for several years. But can the formula survive?

The problem lies in the increased competition from strategic games like *Populous* and *Powermonger* on the one hand and the growing complexity of conflict scenarios (eg *Midwinter*) on the other. The space trading genre has a lot of potential, but it needs to be taken into new areas of resource management and interaction if it is going to give us another game as influential as *Elite*.

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Screen Shots from the Atari ST

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Atari ST

4 & 5 Courtesy of MCA

Can Cadaver breathe new life into an old game-style? IMAGEWORKS and the Bitmaps follow up Zoo's *Treasure Trap* with another 16-bit isometric 3D adventure



At last! A monster to practise evasion routines with! Pity there aren't more...



Beautifully constructed screens include underwater lakes and pools from which arise occasional death-dealing monsters

Isometric adventures were big business on the 8-bits, with games such as *Head over Heels* and *Batman* leading the pack. The secret of their success was probably the fact that they appealed to just about everybody - there was pixel-precision jumping for platform freaks, monster blasting for arcade addicts and puzzles galore for adventurers.

On the 16-bit machines, for reasons not entirely clear, there have been very few isometric titles (Zoo's recent *Treasure Trap* is one exception), so *Cadaver* comes as something of a curiosity, blending a feeling of *deja vu* with a sensation of excited rediscovery. Its credits are certainly impressive - you can't argue with the famous Bitmap Brothers - but can even this much hyped team breathe real magic into such an old genre?

The game starts with you, Karadoc the dwarf, standing by your boat at the entrance to the eerie Castle Wulf. Your mission isn't made clear in the instructions; you have to find it out along the way. This means your first couple of goes will demand a lot of exploration and experimentation to get you a rough idea of what you're supposed to be doing.

The object control method is much more complex than you'd expect if you've been brought up on games like *Knight Lore* and *Head Over Heels*

CADAVER

it consists of a group of icons at the base of the screen which roughly depict different actions (eg. drop, throw, etc.) You select the object you want to use from your rucksack and then whatever you want to do with it from the icon menu.

Graphics are everything you could want them to be - crisp, clear and colourful. The screen is beautifully designed, with everything falling into place just right. The sound effects are few and far between, but what's there is adequate.

The problem with *Cadaver* is that it seems to have lost a good deal of the appeal of the old 8-bit isometric games. That appeal was basically the degree of arcade action - jumping, dodging, and sometimes firing - and the puzzle element was effectively confined to small doses. The

games were easy to get into and the screens were constantly alive with obstacles and opposition. A simple recipe, OK, but an effective one.

In *Cadaver*, however, although all the ingredients are still there, the balance has changed. You spend a lot of the time just walking around, picking things up, dropping them, and walking around again. Although still undeniably an arcade adventure, the emphasis is definitely on the latter.

There's no denying that this is going to be as polished a

game as you're likely to get and there are hundreds of screens and lots of puzzles, but the isometric presentation of the game is slightly misleading. No jumping, dodging mayhem this, but more of a multi-screen puzzler. That will doubtless appeal to many, but personally I think the old recipe had more bounce.

• Nick Baynes

We only had the first two levels of *Cadaver* to play with, so the definitive ACE rating will have to wait. The beautiful presentation, however, hides a controversial product. There's certainly a lot here to keep you busy, but whether it's the business you're looking for depends on your liking for puzzles and exploration rather than for

RELEASE DETAILS

ATARI ST	£24.99	IMMINENT
AMIGA	£24.99	IMMINENT
IBM PC	£TBA	TO FOLLOW

No other versions planned



Another pretty screen, but *Cadaver* tends to offer rather more scenery than action. As you can see, there's not a lot of bouncing, bobbing, weaving opposition here

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tremendous graphics Vast number of screens Unusual number of control options for the genre
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Definitely lacking in action Takes too long to get into

Originally titled *Federation War* (but renamed *Captive* in a recent ACE competition) this excellent Tony Crowther epic places you in the confines of a huge orbiting fortress somewhere in the depths of space. You are there, not unreasonably, because you are the most evil man in the Galaxy.

Having been cryogenically imprisoned for two hundred years, you are woken by a malfunction

Veteran programmer Tony Crowther leaps back into the limelight with superlative space-age challenge for MINDSCAPE

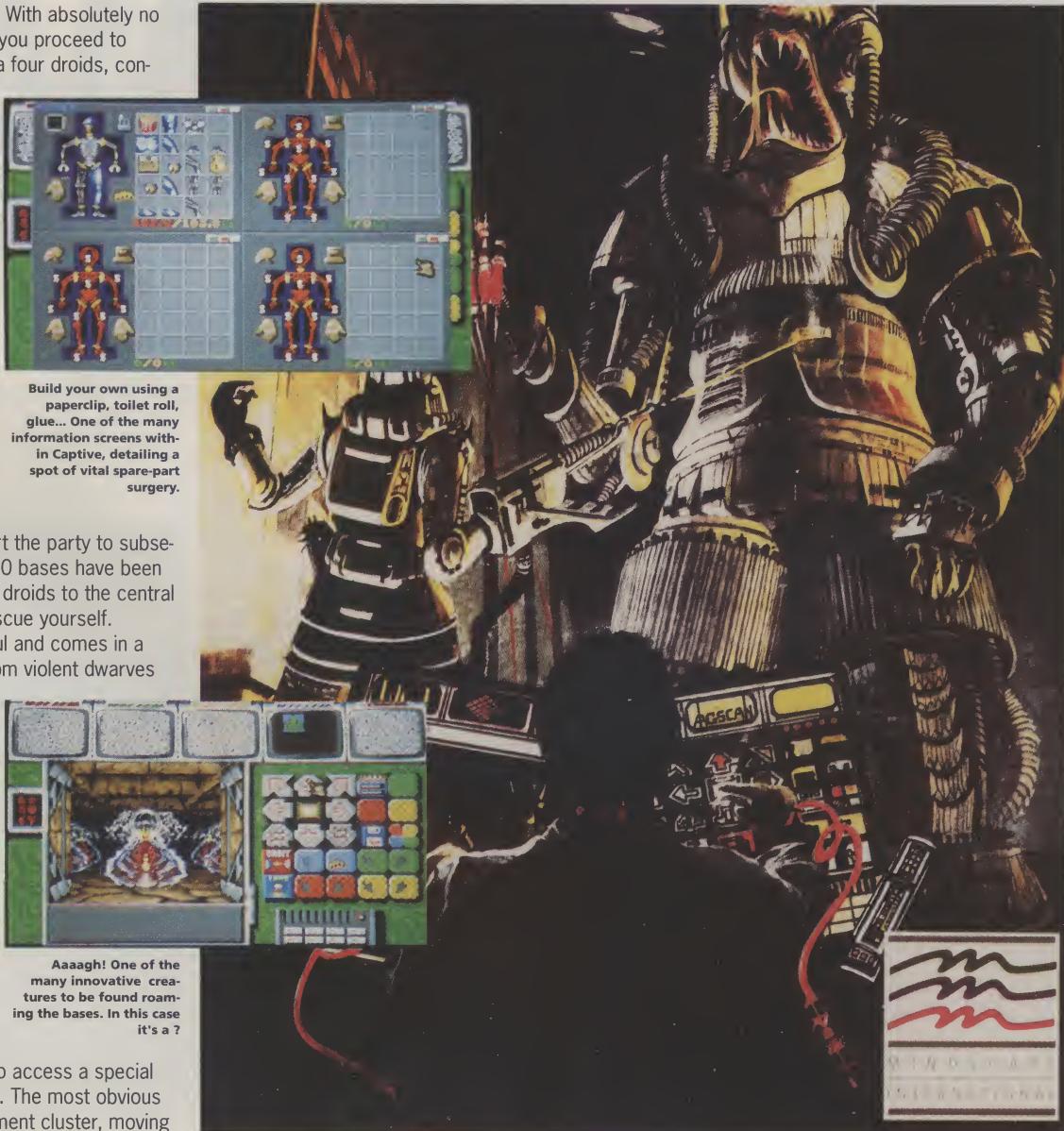


CAPTIVE

within the holding computer. With absolutely no idea where or who you are, you proceed to explore the outside world via four droids, controlled by you from a small computer contained in a briefcase (handy eh?).

Each droid comes in kit form and is fully interchangeable with the others, giving rise to various possible attribute configurations. Together the four units form a sort of RPG 'party' that you move about in battle formation. Under your remote control, your droid party must traverse the 10 bases holding the fortress in its orbit, destroying the power source in each and obtaining a spacecraft to transport the party to subsequent fortresses. Once all 10 bases have been shut down, you must fly the droids to the central fortress in an attempt to rescue yourself.

The opposition is plentiful and comes in a variety of forms, ranging from violent dwarves through mechanical tanks to dragons! Coming up against any adversary requires fast reflexes, thankfully catered for by the icon driven interface, which makes for easy control in any situation. The icons themselves are arranged into relevant clusters and most fulfil a dual function, depending on which mouse button is pressed. The left button initiates an action, whilst the right allows the player to access a special feature relevant to that icon. The most obvious of the controls is the movement cluster, moving



Build your own using a paperclip, toilet roll, glue... One of the many information screens within *Captive*, detailing a spot of vital spare-part surgery.

Aaaagh! One of the many innovative creatures to be found roaming the bases. In this case it's a ?

SYSTEM ARCHITECTURE

Once booted up, the first thing to hit you about *Captive* is its size: a staggering total of 5900 missions (64900 bases) to undertake.

All this is possible because Tony Crowther has developed a new data generating and management system, called Architect, which means that each base is unique. The system also means that each time a level is complete, a new, higher level can be automatically preconstructed.

Architect adds variety of gameplay and environment to some excellent, bitmapped graphics in a distinctive style which suit the game well, enhancing the feel of each alien world. The various inhabitants of each planet have interesting movement characteristics and have been carefully designed to convey as much variety and originality as possible. Have you ever seen a fanged rampaging bush before? Sound is represented in true, realtime stereo for that alien enhancing effect - it's a bit repetitive but that doesn't detract from the gameplay.

each droid in battle formation. This control also allows you to rotate your droid, giving you a view of your immediate surroundings whilst remaining in one spot.

Each droid may be moved around within the formation by clicking on two separate droid icons whereupon they will swap places. The lead droid is denoted by a crown on his position icon, (to the right of the control cluster), which also shows a simplified health and power reading and allows any droid to be promoted to leader simply by double-clicking the icon.

Information on general health and the contents of each droid backpack may also be gained from this icon. It is from here that the droids may be modified - objects and even limbs may be exchanged. Other important icons include the multi-droid icon, (allowing the player to view the statistics of all droids at once) the hand icons (for allocating, swapping and using objects) and the disk icon, which allows the player to load or save a game in progress.

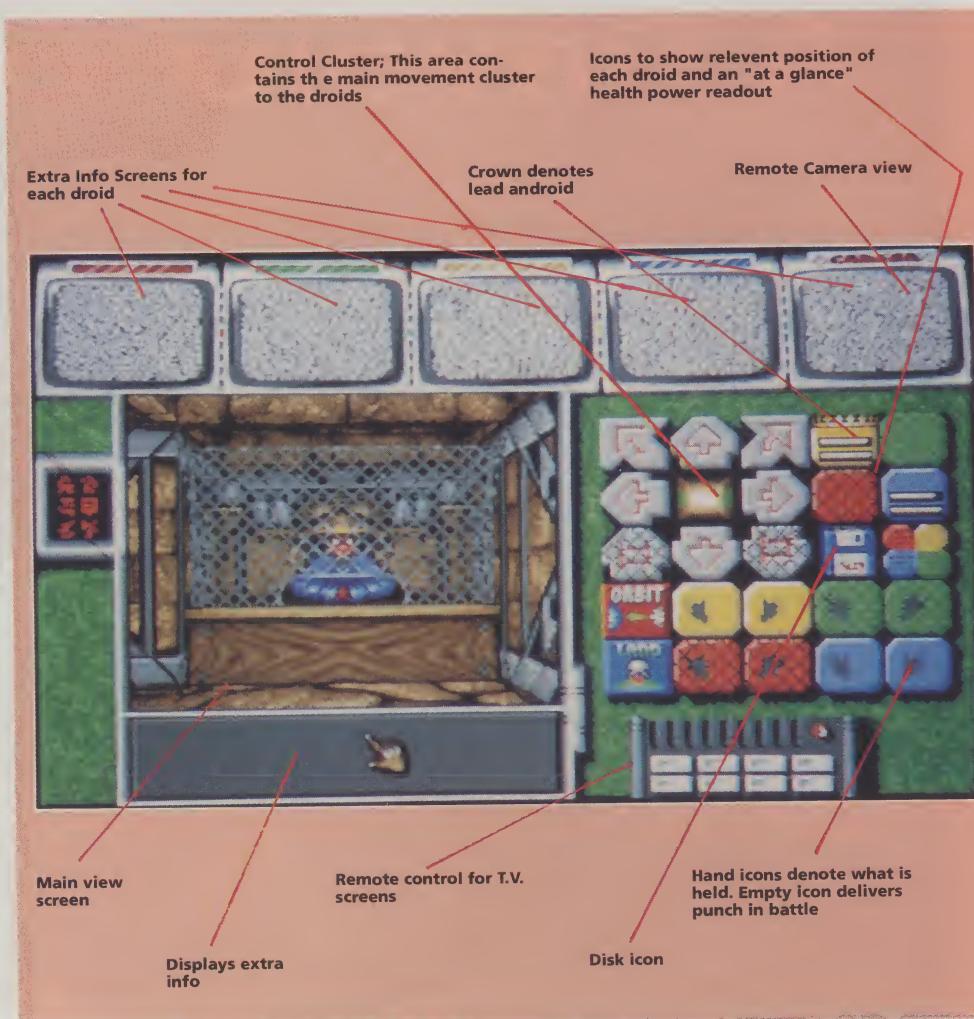
DUNGEON MASTERY

The majority of the screen is devoted to the main viewing area, where the action is displayed in first person perspective (using a similar 3-D style to that seen in *Dungeon Master*). Your location is viewed through the eyes of the leading droid - in the event of its demise the screen blacks out.

Battle against enemies is carried out by clicking on a droid's hand icon to administer a punch (if empty handed) or a blast from the current weapon held. In typical skill-based RPG style, different droids have different degrees of proficiency in using the various weapons.

When creatures die, they may leave objects to be picked up, such as more weapons or money. Battles often lead to injuries, whereupon you wander around until you find a shop where any spare cash may be spent on armoury, useful extras or repairs to damaged droids. Above the main play-area are five screens displaying extra information, such as local environment or even a sneak peek to spot danger, using a remote camera which may be purchased from one of the shops.

John Pierre Trevor, responsible for the *Captive* artwork - also credited with design for *Batman*, *Star Wars* and *Herbie*.



Fans of *Dungeon Master* will find *Captive* an essential buy, combining the elements which made the former so successful, and adding the ability to control and modify four different droids (and save them for later use), giving the game a further element of strategy whilst retaining all the speed and action of an arcade game. For those with a less than strategic inclination, *Captive* will still prove exciting due to its large number of possibilities. It's also far

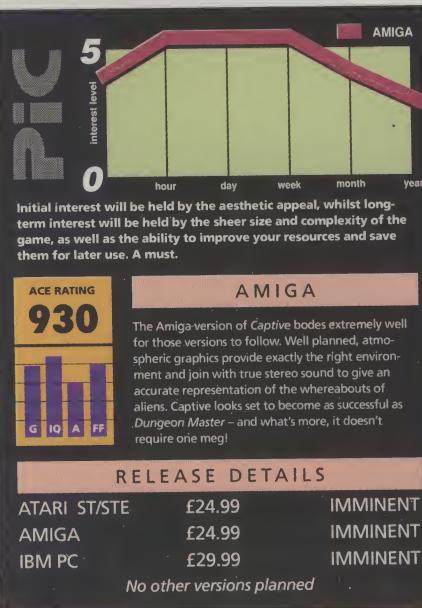
from easy to complete, providing many hours of intriguing gameplay.

● Alex Ruranski

YOU NAMED THAT GAME!

Captive started life as *Project X* and we asked ACE readers to enter the ACE Name the Game competition and christen it. The winner is John Millward from Dudley, West Midlands. His suggestion was, of course, *CAPTIVE* and he's won himself a Gameboy and Mindscape software. Not only that, but Mindscape have agreed to credit John in the game itself.

The two runners-up (who also receive Gameboys) are Mark Hughes from Glossop in Derbyshire, who suggested "The C.A.L.L.E.D" (The Cryogenic Awakening Lost Logic Empathic Droids) and Andrew Pike from Eccles in Manchester, who put forward "Escape from (Galacto) Cryo-Crypt 248c/418 serious". Andrew then goes on to say that "if you add 248 and 418 you get 666, The Number Of The Beast". Er...yes...of course...



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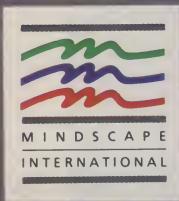
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Actual screen shots

M I N D S C A P E

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Your goalie leaps to save a shot...The movements are beautifully programmed and animated

The first thing you notice is the viewpoint. Most games have the usual top-down view or, in the case of *Kick Off*, from directly above. Microprose however have opted for one at eye-level.

The effect is extremely attractive, especially when combined with excellent player movement (surely the best ever).

The player under your control is indicated with a white arrow, but unfortunately the attractive display method makes gameplay difficult. The amount of pitch shown on the screen is comparatively small, so when the opposition have the ball you usually have to direct off-screen players in for a tackle, which is extremely difficult. And, of course, the computer is bringing in off-screen players too, so you often lose possession to players who have only just materialised. There's a pitch radar screen which helps, but to play effectively you have to spend more time looking at this than the actual screen.

Presentation is very impressive with smooth

animation and nice colours. As in a lot of footie games these days there is the digital scoreboard with a "Mr Men" like character that either congratulates or commiserates depending on who scored. Another nice touch are the pictures of the Ref and the Linemen which appear with fouls and throw-ons. Sound effects are the usual cheers and whistles along with some nice tunes here and there.

The passing system is one of the game's strong points, however. The fire button controls power, left and right movements the swerve, and vertical movements the height. The power bar is split into four blocks, with each one representing an increasing degree of power. Height and swerve are adjusted while the fire button is pressed so unless you're going for a full powered boot you'll need to be quick.

The Goalie is controlled by computer except in penalties. It's for this reason alone that I didn't get thrashed 10-1 by the computer. There are 3 skill levels: Easy, where unless your passes are totally off they always find their mark. Intermediate, in which the ball is semi-intelligent, and Advanced in which you have to do all the work yourself.

In the actual game you have the choice of either World Cup or Superleague in which the best clubs around the world square off with one another. Apart from these the only other things you can do are to practice passes, penalties, etc. Although you can choose your team, you can't choose formation or the players you want, losing the World Cup feel that, for example, Italy 1990 had.



One of the neat aspects of the presentation, a digitised shot of the stadium after the game



Great graphics with some nice tunes instantly impress, holding your attention. Then the drawbacks of the game become all too apparent – once the computer gets the ball it's very hard to get it back! Unfortunately, for the average player, persistence is not going to improve the scores. Lack of match options (eg pitch, formation) and no two player option seals its fate.



ATARI ST

The graphics are very impressive with fluid animation and an unusual viewpoint. Sound is nothing spectacular but it doesn't detract from the game. The passing system is easy to get to grips with but otherwise it seems that Microprose have concentrated too much on accuracy and animation at the expense of playability.

RELEASE DETAILS

ATARI ST	£TBA	TBA
AMIGA	£TBA	TBA
IBM PC	£TBA	TBA

No other versions planned

The worst thing however is the lack of a two player option which has to be the most important thing after playability, because, in almost every case, playing with or against someone is infinitely more enjoyable than doing the same with a computer.

Microprose are renowned for their excellent flight sims. Perhaps that's why this product seems to have veered a little too far towards 'reality' – computer footie needs to be a game first and a simulation second.

• Khalid Howlader

Just as you thought the season for "footie" games was over with the end of the World Cup, MICROPROSE release what they call 'the most accurate simulation of football seen on the screen'

INTERNATIONAL SOCCER CHALLENGE

TORVAK THE WARRIOR

The team that brought you the excellent *Rick Dangerous* go hacking and slaying with CORE DESIGN

Remember Conan? So do Core Design, whose latest release *Torvak The Warrior* bears a striking resemblance to the story of said sword-wielding maestro.

Following a five year self-imposed exile, Torvak returns to his homeland Ragnar, ravaged beyond recognition in the bloody Tormanian wars.

Having reached the outskirts of the once thriving village, he is startled by a voice emanating from the now twisted figure of 'The Elder', who informs Torvak of the arrival of the Necromancer and the darkness he has brought to bear. Instinctively, Torvak now knows the path he must take – a career in carvery as a hacking, slaying sprite.

Initially armed with a double-handed axe, you must guide Torvak through the five levels comprising his homeland until coming face to face with the Necromancer, whom you must then dispatch. Each level is distinctive, increasing in difficulty, beginning with Torvak's ravaged village and progressing through the swamp to the mountains and into the jungle, after which you must negotiate the Necromancer's castle.

Particular types of enemies (including Orcs, Piranhas, Scorpions, Warriors, Spiders and killer Porcupines!) are specific to each level and have distinctive attacking methods, each of which must obviously be dealt with in a specific way. Levels also include some underground sequences,



Torvak leaps into a marsh, wielding his morningstar, and going for treasure

mer and a morningstar.

Throughout each level, destroying certain parts of the scenery releases bonus items such as armour (for limited protection), food (to replenish energy) and treasure. In addition to these more basic items, you may also come across special bonuses such as Speed Up, decreasing Torvak's reaction time; Extend, adding extra units to the maximum energy allowed, and Power Up. The last of these bestows Torvak with greater hit power against adversaries and, when coupled with Speed Up, gives you a good idea of what Bruce Lee would have been like playing Rambo. Each item collected is displayed above the main playing area in the status window.

Progressing to the end of a level brings

Torvak into confrontation with the obligatory guardian. These increase in difficulty and include a Stag, a Gryphon and a Serpent until, at the end of the game, you encounter the Necromancer.

Plot aside, having booted up *Torvak* you're faced with what appears to be a very run-of-the-mill



Our hero is about to leap down a hole to a lower section, escaping that stone-faced Rockman in the process

accessed via holes in the ground, but including the same hostiles.

Attacking an enemy may be achieved using 3 combinations of joystick movement and fire-button, in addition to which Torvak may find and cast spells. These are, in effect, magical versions of the 4 possible physical weapons – the default axe, a sword, a ham-



Initial frustration at the sluggish control is somewhat overcome as timing is mastered. However, gameplay soon becomes tedious and is far from helped by below par graphics and sound. Considering Core have been responsible for the superb *Rick Dangerous* and (to be reviewed next month) *Rick Dangerous 2*, *Torvak The Warrior* leaves us wondering.

AMIGA	
ACE RATING	650
G	4 4 4 4
RELEASE DETAILS	
ATARI ST	£24.99
AMIGA	£24.99
No other versions planned	



Just some of the ugly critters you'll have to carbonado during your hacking, slaying, slicing, dicing derring-do

hack'n'slay game in the same vein as the age-old *Rastan Saga*. The other immediately inescapable fact is that *Torvak* can be extremely frustrating. The slow initial speed of the main sprite hampers the gameplay and lowers the interest level.

Once used to the sluggish control, however, timing begins to improve along with gameplay and progression. Each level is of considerable length and the extras to be found are a welcome addition to character performance and keep you persevering in a game that would otherwise lose interest fairly quickly.

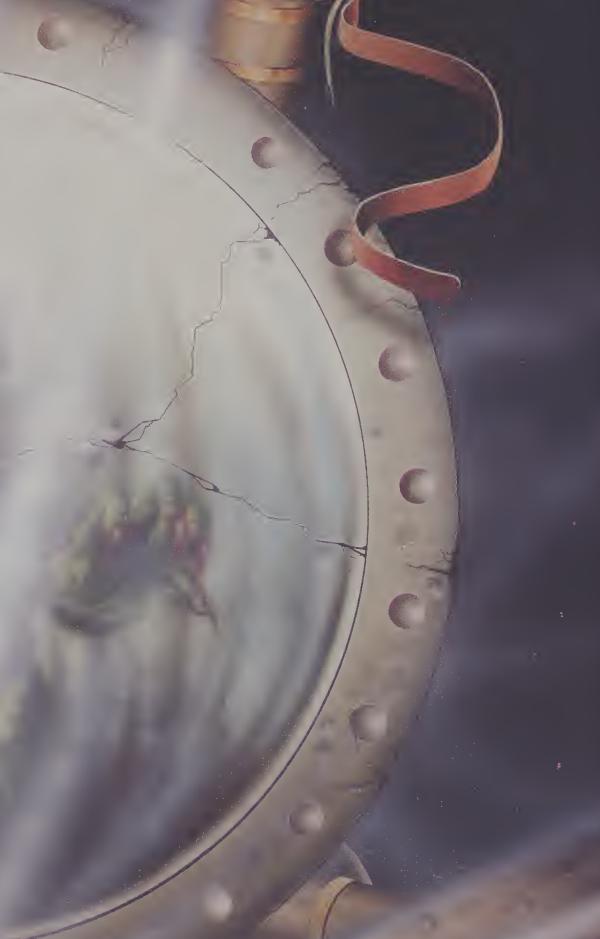
On the visual side, *Torvak* suffers somewhat. Although the sprites have all been well designed, colour and animation appear to have been lost along the way, both falling far short of what a 16-bit machine is capable of. Backgrounds are both lacklustre and repetitive, with a non-parallax horizontal scroll and very little detail.

Sonically, FX are limited to the statutory grunt and swish noises associated with hack'n'slay games, and the soundtracks that are present would seem somehow better suited to a race game!

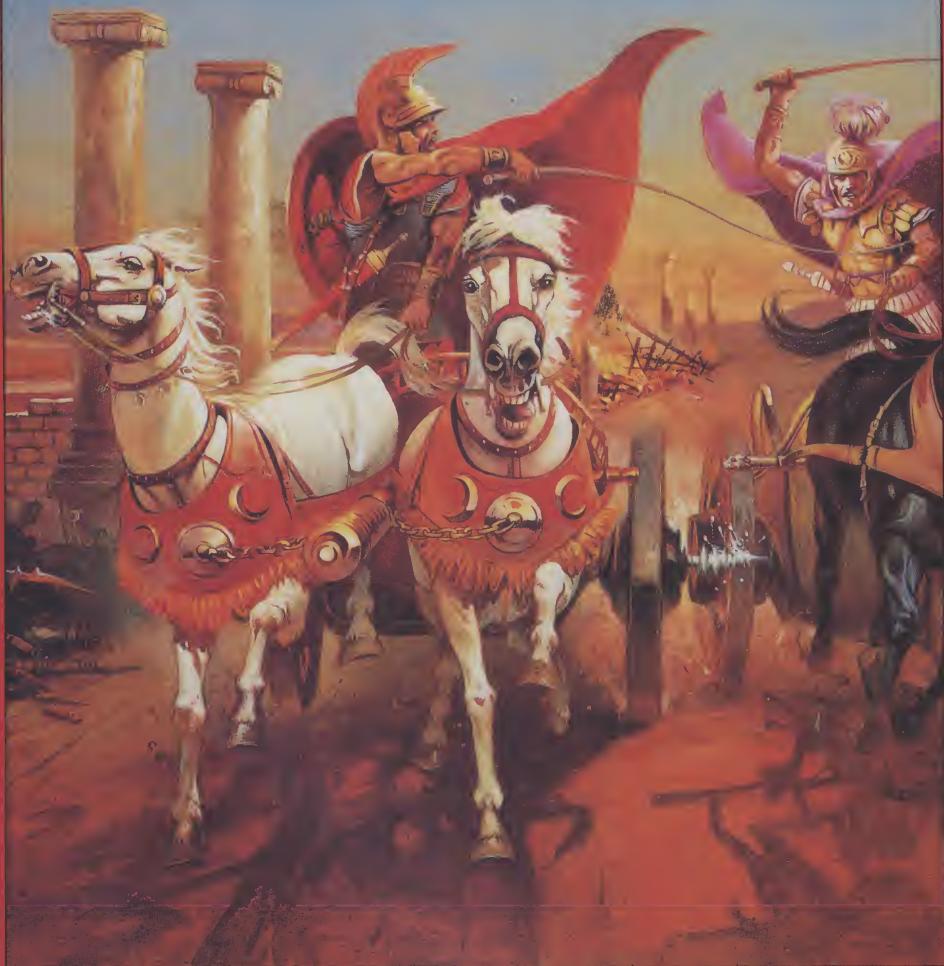
A challenge, certainly, but the determination is as much to overcome the unresponsive control as it is to succeed and enjoy. Definitely a game for devout barbarian fans only.

• Alex Ruranski

TORI AK THE WARRIOR



CARTHAGE



CARTHAGE

Feature Packed Action and Strategy

As a Carthagian hero you must not only repel Roman invasion by successful troop strategy but also maintain your armies' ever-waning supplies by running the gauntlet on your chariot to deliver much-needed money.

Survey the detailed North African landscape and zoom in on your troops to administer strategy. Decide which of your armies needs a cash injection then grab the reins for a mind-boggling first-person-perspective 3-D chariot race to deliver the money . . .

Strategy and arcade action superbly combined to give you a taste of ancient history so real you can almost smell the elephants!

Screen shots from the Amiga

SEEING IS BELIEVING



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The False Prophet



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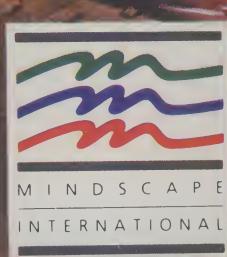
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IBM PC • £34.99



ATARI ST • £29.99



I'll huff and I'll puff - The excellently animated opening sequence from DRAGONFLIGHT

On a wing and a prayer with THALION

RELEASE DETAILS

ATARI ST	£29.99dk	Early Sept
AMIGA	£29.99dk	Early Sept
No other versions planned		

In the traditional mould of the role-playing game, Thalion Software, previously known for such games as *Seven Gates Of Jambala* and *Chambers Of Shaolin*, now bring you *Dragonflight*, a quest to reinstate magic and discover the fate of the dragons, now disappeared but once prolific within the land of Pegana.

Incorporating all the aspects that RPG fans have come to appreciate, *Dragonflight* promises to include real game depth, atmospheric sound and stunning graphics together with numerous animated sequences (including battle scenes) of very high quality. Taking control of a party of 4 characters – now almost standard within any fantasy RPG (warrior, magic user, dwarf and elf) – *Dragonflight* leads you through 10 dungeons with up to 14 levels displayed in the first person perspective and through 12 cities and villages.

Interaction is of course vital and to this end there are dozens of free-roaming independent characters whom you must associate with in the event of success. As well as presenting the player with an extensive system of spells, *Dragonflight* incorporates more than 150 use-



Beards 'n Bimbos - any one of these four characters are fully at your disposal

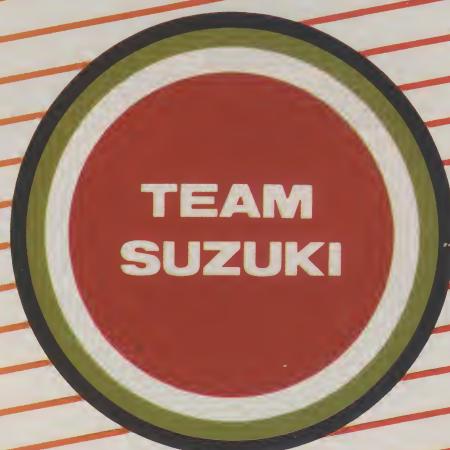
able items such as weapons, potions, clothes and scrolls. Presentation comes in the form of a lengthy, illustrated novella (describing plot and detailing instructions), sticker and poster.

All in all, 2.5 megabytes of data have been used to bring you an RPG of what looks like the highest quality. Don't miss the full review of *Dragonflight* in the next issue...

• Alex Ruranski

DRAGONFLIGHT

FAST CARS - FAST BIKES



ONLY GREMLIN CAN DO THIS
SEE US ON STAND H6 AT ECES

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LONDON



13TH - 16TH
SEPTEMBER



NIGHTBREED - ARCADE GAME on the C64. All six versions of the arcade game took six months to develop.

Two tense tales of terror from OCEAN

NIGHTBREED



ROBOCOP 2. The sequel to the UK's best-selling computer game of 1989 is currently being developed on the Spectrum, C64, CPC console, Amiga, ST and Nintendo Entertainment System. It features eight levels of play including shooting gallery's, plus heat-seeking missile and thermograph accessories for our chrome-boy. Out in November.

Clive Barker's latest horror movie has inspired the chart-topping Manchester software house to develop two games based on the film: *Nightbreed - The Interactive Movie* (Amiga, ST, PC) and *Nightbreed - The Arcade Game* (Spectrum, C64, Amiga, ST, CPC, PC). Both games have been written by Painting by Numbers, a Sheffield-based software development team.

"We liaised closely with Clive Barker and visited Pinewood Studios while the *Nightbreed* movie was being made," states Mike Rogers, one of the directors at Painting by Numbers and co-programmer of the *Nightbreed* computer games.

Clive Barker is a prolific British horror writer whose previous work includes *Hellraiser* and the *Books of Blood* short stories. Unlike many professional authors, he was very keen to have an input in game design. Rogers confirms, "The game is closer to the original book than the movie".

The book, movie, game plot centers around the Midian, a strange underworld populated by mysterious creatures, ghastly mutants and other eerie fairy-folk. The hero is drawn into this twilight zone, unaware that he holds the key to its future survival. You play that ill-prepared hero.

Nightbreed - The Arcade Game is a traditional arcade adventure, while *Nightbreed - The Interactive Movie* hits Cinemaware games head-on. It's a mixture of attractive 'splash' intro screens and various mini-arcade sequences with you either killing or dodging approximately 40 Nightbreed creatures.

Play begins with you driving a car around the outskirts of town via an overhead map display. If you manage to avoid the local asylum and police roadblocks, you're chased through a graveyard by a hungry cannibal called Peloquin. A quick burst on the mouse button gets you through this

PAINTING BY NUMBERS

The two *Nightbreed* games were programmed for Ocean by Painting by Numbers, a group of two programmers and two graphic artists: Mike Rogers, Chris Kerr, Stephen Kerr and John Beard. These experienced ex-Gremlin guys have written loads of games in the past eight years including *Thing on a Spring*, *Monty Mole*, *Way of the Tiger*, *Frak 64!*, *Jack and the Beanstalk* and *Run the Gauntlet*. They've handled all nine versions of the *Nightbreed* Interactive Movie and Arcade Game.

"We were part of the Gremlin stable from 1984-88 but we eventually wanted some freedom to do our own thing," says Rogers.

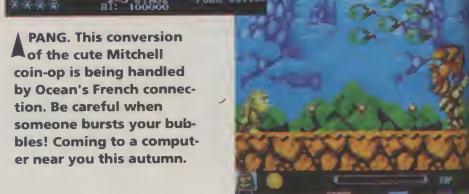
So what was the hardest thing to program in the *Nightbreed* games? "Fitting all 4MB of data into the Interactive Movie was probably the most difficult achievement. Writing code is like building a pyramid - you have to get the base exactly right otherwise the whole thing topples down around you."



NIGHTBREED - ARCADE GAME. Even the Spectrum specters are scary!



TOKI. Ocean in France is converting this strange Tad Corp cute platform-scrolling coin-op. Out on the major micros in the autumn.



PANG. This conversion of the cute Mitchell coin-op is being handled by Ocean's French connection. Be careful when someone bursts your bubbles! Coming to a computer near you this autumn.

- Multiple arcade sequences.
- Four megabytes of graphics data.
- Faithful to the *Nightbreed* film.
- Boring map movement.
- Disappointing audio.

"FLYING THIS MISSION IS LIKE...

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...SHAKING
HANDS WITH
THE DEVIL."

Atari ST version.



Screen shots are only intended to be illustrative of the game play and not the screen graphics which vary considerably between different formats in quality and appearance and are subject to the computer's specifications.

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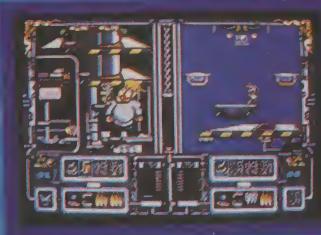
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FLIP-IT & MAGNOSE

EXCITEMENT ON TAP!



Screen shots: ATARI ST version



TWO CAN PLAY AT THIS GAME! THE PLANET MARS IS RUNNING OUT OF WATER - AND ONLY YOU CAN SAVE IT ... In a last ditch attempt to save the drought-stricken Red Planet, its two top agents, FLIP-IT & MAGNOSE, have been sent to Earth to collect enough water to save their planet. Sounds simple? Don't you believe it!

In FLIP-IT & MAGNOSE, two players can compete head-to-head on their mission across six action packed levels thanks to an innovative split-screen display.

The question is - WHO WILL RETURN AS CHAMPION OF MARS?



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THE SPY WHO LOVED ME

Bond is back courtesy of DOMARK and the Kremlin!

Welcome comrade. After a quiet summer, Domark is set to release four games this autumn thanks to its new in-house software development team known as the Kremlin.

The Spy Who Loved Me, based around the James Bond movie, on Spectrum, C64, CPC, Amiga, ST, PC. **Badlands**, conversion of the souped-up Super Sprint Tengen coin-op, on Spectrum, C64, Amiga, ST, CPC, PC. **Mig-29 Fulcrum** (working title), Domark's first flight-sim, on Amiga, ST, PC. **STUN Runner**, conversion of the 3D Roadblasters Tengen coin-op, on Spectrum, C64, CPC, Amiga, ST, PC.

• Rik Haynes

DIAL A DOMARK DEMO

The comrades at the Kremlin (Domark's software development house) are offering a unique service to all modern users - go upline and download special games, music and graphics demos (Amiga, ST and PC). You can also leave messages and BBSes. The Domark/Kremlin bulletin board is open everyday from 8pm-8am on 0932 821744. Some connect codes for the cyberspace cowboys: 2400 B, N, 12400 baud, eight databits, no parity (no stopbit). We promise you won't get flat-towed!



BADLANDS. A simple, but playable, racing game. Post-holocaust battle cars smash through eight treacherous tracks in a race to the finish - or death!



Roger Moore played James Bond in seven 007 movies.



KREMLIN
THE KREMLIN

SHAKEN BUT NOT STIRRED

THE SPY WHO LOVED ME. A multi-level movie-license game. Driving your Lotus Esprit in a *Spy Hunter* kinda way. Coming up next... the underwater shoot'em-up section. Did you know 007 doesn't like short people or The Beatles?



SHAKEN BUT NOT STIRRED

THE SPY WHO LOVED ME. Bond plants the explosive charge as you blast Stromberg's henchpeople. Did you know 007's enemy, SPECTRE, stands for Special Executive for Counter-espionage, Terrorism, Revenge and Extortion?



THE SPY WHO LOVED ME. A selection of sprites from the shoot Jaws section. Did you know 007 has a maid called May?

THE SPY WHO LOVED ME. Jaws has your Russian girlie in his grasp. Time to tackle him in *Op Wolf* style. Did you know 007 likes his eggs boiled for three and a quarter minutes?

DO PAY ATTENTION 007

There have been 16 official Bond movies plus lots of 007 inspired spy capers like *Casino Royale* (David Niven as Bond and Woody Allen playing his nephew), *Never Say Never Again* (with toupee-touting Sean Connery and rubber-faced Rowan Atkinson) and the James Coburn *Flint* films.

- 1962 Dr No
- 1963 From Russia with Love
- 1964 Goldfinger
- 1965 Thunderball
- 1967 You Only Live Twice
- 1969 On Her Majesty's Secret Service
- 1971 Diamonds are Forever
- 1973 Live and Let Die
- 1974 The Man with the Golden Gun
- 1977 The Spy Who Loved Me
- 1979 Moonraker
- 1981 For Your Eyes Only
- 1983 Octopussy
- 1985 A View to a Kill
- 1987 The Living Daylights
- 1989 License to Kill

THE SPY WHO LOVED ME. Stopping Stromberg on the Spectrum. Did you know 007 is half Scots, half Swiss?



STUN RUNNER

A fast polygon racer for speed freaks. **STUN RUNNER** has 23 levels including the Knee Jerk, Split Decision, Close Call, Coat Hangar, Clover Leaf and Blood Alley. Out in November on all major micros.

MIG-29 FULCRUM (working title). Domark's first flight-sim is being programmed by Simis, a professional simulator design team who previously worked at British Aerospace on Harrier sims. This work in progress shot shows your 60 polygon Soviet MiG-29 fighter. The game features five completely different missions involving reconnaissance, ground strike and air combat. Amiga will be enhanced by enlarged 256-line display and 32 colours, while PC has a deluxe 256-colour VGA option. No 8-bit versions are currently planned, "due to complexity and memory requirements". Out at Christmas.



"I'll take 2,000 lbs of cluster bombs and a couple of gatlings, please." Tooling up before the rumble.

STORMOVIK

Take to the sky as a Soviet Top Gun with Electronic Arts new flight sim...

The year is 1991: The Soviet Union, in a bid to preserve its Communist status, is fighting a war against insurgents within its own army and against blocs of anti-communist terrorists, who operate from the other side of the East German border.

Enter the Russian's newest and most advanced ground attack jet – the Sukhoi SU25 Stormovik. Specifically designed for defensive low-level counter operations against ground targets, the SU25 is regarded as the best ground attack jet in the world, and is extremely difficult to shoot down. As an elite young Stormovik pilot with the Red Airforce, you'll be ordered to fly challenging and dangerous attack missions against the enemy, who will sometimes be fighting with sophisticated tanks and weapons captured from the Soviet Army.

As a new recruit, you're advised to train in simulator mode to familiarise yourself with the aircraft, its handling and weapons systems before you take on the real enemy.

Your flight begins with a 'bombing up' session where you select the necessary bombs and missiles. Then it's into the cockpit, rev the engines and scream down the runway. The first thing you notice about flying the SU25 is the speed; the vector-filled scenery whizzes

below you at an alarming rate, and you need to keep a constant eye on the height indicator on your cockpit Head Up Display (HUD) to prevent yourself from making a violent return to earth.

The aircraft is extremely responsive to joystick control; just the most delicate nudge on the stick is enough to perform most manoeuvres and any panicky movements on the stick will result in you and your machine hurtling to earth in a fair-ground ride fashion!

SU25 takes place over a three year period, from 1991-1993, and each year has its own list of flight missions, which grow in difficulty as the conflict against the terrorists progresses. Select your mission and you'll be briefed on your objectives and the location of your targets, what weaponry to carry, and what sort of weaponry the enemy will be using against you.

As flight sims go, *Stormovik* is one of the fastest and smoothest I've seen on the PC. The program supports CCG EGA, MCGA and Tandy graphics mode. The sound is the usual collection of tinny-sounding PC effects, but once you get

into the groove of strafing a lorry convoy at zero feet, you won't be too bothered about the sound.

One little feature I liked were the missions flown at night, and in extremely poor visibility (there's no horizon – just grey pea soup). Many different viewpoints from the cockpit to the control tower (now a standard feature in jet flight sims) are also included. Needless to say, there's a chunky



Oops... You're dead – but your memorial will keep your memory alive for future generations

PC

IBM PC

ACE RATING
850

The game makes good use of the EGA graphics in the static screens, and the sharpness and movement of the vector-filled polygon graphics is up to Electronic Arts' usual high standard. Can't say the same for the sound, though. Makes you pay for the day when all PCs have Amiga sound chips. The real attraction here, however, is the speed the programmer has managed to squeeze out of the machine.

RELEASE DETAILS

IBM PC	£29.99	OCTOBER
No other versions planned at present		



Panoramic view of your airbase and surrounding Russian steppes from your cockpit.

and authoritative looking manual included with the game, and you need to spend a little time poring over the basics before climbing into the cockpit.

There's nothing startlingly new about SU25 (the same menus of missions to fly, the same briefing and bombing up screens), but compared to other flight sims on the PC, it's fast, well programmed and challenging. Chocks away, Tovarich!

● Ivan Hawkesley

NB At the time of going to press, EA were still debating the final name of the game. *Stormovik* is the current favourite...

SU25 FACTBOX

The aircraft in Electronic Arts' new flight sim is based on a real aircraft – the Sukhoi SU25 "Frogfoot" close support and reconnaissance jet. With a crew of one pilot, a top speed of 546mph, and a combat range of 345 miles, the "Frogfoot" made itself a formidable reputation as a ground attack jet operating against Mujahideen Guerrillas in Afghanistan. It's distinctive long wingspan enables it to carry a frightening battery of weapons for its role; two 57mm rocket launcher pods on each wing, cluster bombs and a centrally mounted gatling gun for soft targets. In addition, it can also carry laser-guided attack missiles, and air-to-air missiles for its own defence.



GREMLINS 2

TM

THE NEW BATCH



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PLAY 'THE BREED'...THEN FEAR THE NIGHT

Clive Barker's

NIGHTBREED

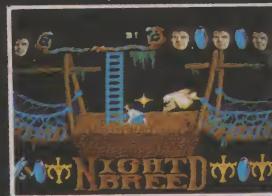
CABAL

THE INTERACTIVE MOVIE



BELIEVED TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR A SERIES OF MURDERS, AARON BOONE HEARS OF A PLACE CALLED MIDIAN WHERE A RACE OF SUPERNATURAL BEINGS LIVE, ISOLATED FROM THE INHUMANITIES OF MORTALITY. IN A BID TO ESCAPE THE UNJUST WORLD, BOONE DISCOVERS THE UNDERGROUND NECROPOLIS, HOPING TO BE ACCEPTED AS ONE OF THE 'BREED'. HOWEVER, THIS AMBITION BECOMES FULFILLED IN A NIGHTMARE FASHION, WHEN HE IS BITTEN BY PELOQUIN, A CANNIBALISTIC BREED MEMBER, AND THUS UNDERGOES AN INCREDIBLE TRANSFORMATION. UNWITTINGLY, BOONE LEADS THE POLICE DEPARTMENT TO MIDIAN, IN A CIVILIZATION WHERE EVERYTHING THAT IS DIFFERENT MUST BE DESTROYED. THESE 'SONS OF THE FREE' MOUNT AN ENORMOUS ASSAULT UPON THE UNDERGROUND CITY, AIDED BY 'THE MASK' - THE TRUE SUPERNATURAL KILLER FOR WHOM BOONE HAD BEEN MISTAKEN. HAS BOONE EXPILED THE DOWNFALL OF THE NIGHTBREED, OR CAN HE BECOME THEIR SAVIOR?

A COMBINATION OF STRATEGY ELEMENTS AND ARCADE-STYLE ACTION MAKES THIS A GAME OF UNCOMPROMISING CHALLENGE, VARYING EVERY TIME IT IS PLAYED.



Clive Barker's NIGHTBREED TM & © 1990 Morgan Creek Productions.
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ATARI ST
CBM AMIGA
PC

OCEAN

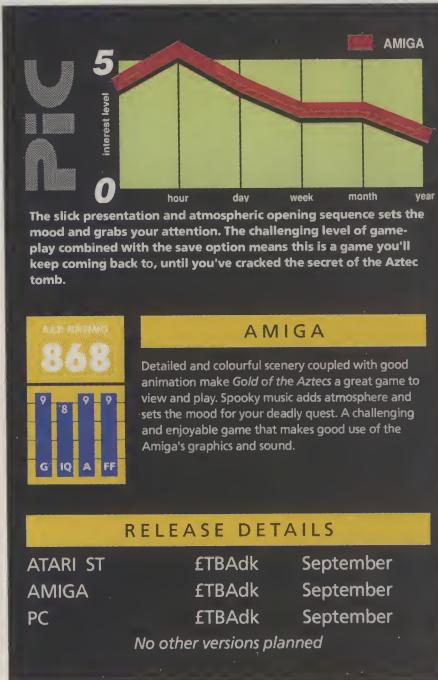
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GOLD OF THE AZTECS

Discover the steamy secrets of US GOLD'S Aztec adventure

Bret Conrad, ex-US Special Forces and one-time CIA, is an all-action guy waiting for an adventure to happen. The adventure comes along in the form of an old Amazon map, pinpointing the location of a hidden Aztec tomb. Within the tomb lies incredible wealth – and it's there just waiting to be plundered.

Programmed by Kinetica software, *Gold of the Aztecs* is the result of 27,000 hours of work with several megabytes worth of graphics and animation. This arcade adventure smoothly scrolls on as Brett parachutes into the jungle, shoots his way past hordes of nasty Amazonian headhunters, and penetrates into the underground passages that lead to the Aztec tomb and the gold. As if the headhunters aren't deadly enough, the route to the Aztec tomb is riddled



PICTURE

AMIGA

AGE RATING 868

RELEASE DETAILS

ATARI ST	£TBAdk	September
AMIGA	£TBAdk	September
PC	£TBAdk	September
No other versions planned		

with a variety of very nasty booby traps, all waiting to consign Bret to the same fate that befell a group of greedy Conquistadors 400 years before.

Against the dangers of the Amazon, Bret is armed only with his trusty automatic and a machete. Luckily he's a very athletic adventurer, able to run, jump, climb, not to mention forward and backwards somersault his way out of trouble. Guiding Bret through all the danger to the ultimate prize calls for patience, nerves of steel, and some serious joystick wagging. Avoiding deadly blowpipe-wielding headhunters, killer ele-



Gold of the Aztecs – pretty and highly playable, with the added bonus of a SAVE option

phants, and deadly Aztec booby traps will take some practice.

The map gives you a scrolling piece by piece view of the complete layout of passages leading to the tomb, and as you'll see, it's enormous! Nobody could hope to get right the way through the labyrinth in one sitting, so a 'save game' option is included.

In terms of gameplay, layout and presentation, *Gold of the Aztecs* is a slickly conceived game. The sprites are detailed and well drawn – Bret himself is a typical Rambo style hunk, while the headhunters are a pot-bellied looking lot. The horizontally scrolling jungle scenery is well rendered, colourful without garish and unrealistic, while the arcade style animation keeps the action moving.

It might take a long time, but finally getting Bret through to the actual tomb, and getting the gold, gives a real sense of achievement, not to mention wealth beyond your dreams. There's enough tension and excitement in *Gold of the Aztecs* to satisfy most arcade style adventure freaks.

● Ivan Hawksley

SHOCKWAVE

They're shocking. They're captivating. They're the latest games from DIGITAL MAGIC SOFTWARE...

● Rik Haynes



ESCAPE FROM COLDITZ uses the idea of the boardgame but adds some arcade action. You control four allied Prisoners of War attempting to escape Sonderlager – not a new export Euro-fizz but the German 'Special Camp' of Colditz during WWII. This isometric 3D game features over 600 internal locations. "If you really want to, you can even dig tunnels." Out in November on Amiga, ST, PC and C64.



Flying through the SHOCKWAVE factories in your Super-Dooper Mark IV Blastermobile. You must defend four sectors from alien invaders. Mine your mountain ore, support your oil supply in the sea, arrange your army in the forests, and defend your desert factories.



The SHOCKWAVE tunnel sequence in full-swing – shades of Star Wars perhaps? In the game you have to, "desperately try to dodge or destroy hordes of alien scum swarming maniacally towards you!" An Amiga-only game due in September.

Selecting your SHOCKWAVE armaments. You can carry five weapons – chosen from a total of 15 – on each mission. Factories also manufacture extra shields, infra-red for night-flying and a cloaking device which stops aliens clocking you for a limited time.



VAXINE



A wonderful product, not just to look at but to play too. Short term interest will remain high due to easy beginner levels and skill development aids the long term interest. Over 99 levels to keep you going for a long time although inevitably the game will begin to pall in the end. A shoot-em-up for the more scientific gamester - it comes in a specially designed box as well!

ACE RATING
905

ATARI ST

Colour has been well used to give the impression of a surreal landscape, while the graphics themselves move smoothly and very fast. Sonically, the ST suffers to a degree; the introductory sample although brief, is not of particularly high quality, but in-game sounds serve to further enhance the atmosphere. The reviewed version was, according to Assembly Line, only 95% complete, although I could find nothing lacking in any respect. An excellent product.

RELEASE DETAILS

ATARI ST	£19.99dk	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£24.99dk	OCT 90
IBM PC	£24.99dk	OCT 90
No other versions planned		

US GOLD have an antidote for E-Motion fans

US Gold's last ray-traced rarity was *E-Motion*, an odd but highly original game which played upon the basic concepts of 'Newtonian physics' and now, Assembly Line (who also gave us the super-addictive *Pipemania* from Entertainment International) have teamed up with USG to give us a shot of *Vaxine*...

This abstract game is set inside the human body and the objective is to destroy rampaging viruses. You must protect the key body cells which are half buried in tissue. The invading viruses are represented by different coloured balls, as are your antidotes. Failure to hit the viruses with an antidote of a like colour does not destroy the virus, but causes a small star to be dropped, which when blasted, replenishes your limited ammo. In addition to this, clusters of stars may be found hovering over the landscape, for the same purpose. The amount your ammo is increased by, also depends on firing an antidote of the same colour.

Once the viruses have appeared, they immedi-



STARting level one...

ately begin looking for a companion of the same colour. Upon finding each other, they join and hunt for a third. When all three are stringing along they'll head for your most vulnerable parts and pluck them from the body wall. The viruses then pop with excitement, releasing more, different coloured bachelor viruses to repeat the process. To help you, there are portals in the body which, when entered, freeze the game and allow you to move around checking on the locations of hidden viruses. The level is completed when all viruses are eliminated.

Vaxine is definitely a game to test your skills, and while the overall look of the product may deter the more strategic player, the game does require a significant amount of thought as random blasting leads to an ultimately swift demise. Coupled with the need for rapid hand-eye co-ordination, *Vaxine* is recommended as an original and entertaining product.

● Chris Morley

OPERATION STEALTH



Don't just sit there, you've got a stealth fighter to find!

The new Stealth Fighter is the most sophisticated aircraft in aviation history. Totally invisible to Radar, able to fly low and fast, and possessing state of the art weapons and avionics, it's the pride of the US Airforce. Unfortunately for the Americans, it has been stolen!

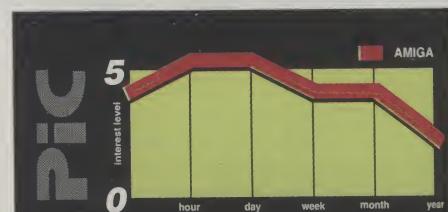
The CIA is called in to hunt for the missing aircraft, and they in turn, call in their top undercover agent, John Glames (a sort of American James Bond). Using his skill, ingenuity, and an array of gadgets, (including such handy travelleing aids as a passport forging machine and a pen that squirts acid) Glames mission to takes him to the exotic South American state of Santa Paragua, (where the the ruling Military Dictator is top of the CIA's suspect list) in the search for the stealth, but he's got to hurry - the KGB has also heard about the disappearance, and their agents are hot on the trail.



Delphine has followed the success of *Future Wars*, with this, another Cinematique interactive adventure. *Operation Stealth* has all the addiction of an interactive adventure, and is totally mouse-driven, making it instantly playable. Unlike the earlier *Future Wars*, improvements have been added in that any objects you pick up and examine, are shown in close up, so you can actually see what you're looking at. You move Glames around exotic locations, pick up, examine, and use objects and generally interact with the scenery and any characters you meet, all with the click of a mouse button. Glames' powers of deduction will be tested to the full as he picks up the trail of the missing fighter and tails suspects, but he'll also need to be brave and resourceful, to get himself out of dangerous situations. The graphics are well presented and the exotic scenery gives the game the feel of a James Bond story. The game will undoubtedly appeal to the sleuths amongst you, while the arcade gamers will like the underwater sequence in the game. The graphics, and animation are well designed and presented and the overall playability of the game makes for an engrossing and addictive game. You'll get really involved and won't want to leave *Op Stealth* alone until you've got to the bottom of the mystery. *Operation Stealth* is a well designed, thought-out and put together game.

● Ivan Hawksley

DELPHINE hunts for a missing stealth fighter...



Maybe it's a cliched spy story, but *Operation Stealth* makes for an entertaining and very playable interactive adventure. Delphine has certainly improved on its last interactive game, *Future Wars*, with several game refinements, and it looks as though Cinematique games are here to stay. Most people will find this one fun to play, and the overall presentation is nice to look at. Budding secret agents and detectives will be hooked.

ACE RATING
910

AMIGA

Nice graphics and a lengthy intro sequence give the game a movie style opening and set the scene for the adventure. A good looking interactive adventure with some neat touches of animation such as the greasy looking airport officials and the way in which the hero purposefully strides from one scene to another. The sound is nothing, incredible; pretty basic sound effects, although the title music is quite groovy.

RELEASE DETAILS

ATARI ST	£24.99dk	September
AMIGA	£24.99dk	September
PC	£29.99dk	September
No other versions planned		



Just some of the little cuties that Millennium plan to have romping across your screen in their underwater green game

Crazy balls and psychedelic landscapes in Millennium's new puzzler...

Millennium's teaser is reminiscent of *Crazy Ball*, a game that appeared on the C64 a while back, and is just as weird and wonderful.

Filbert is a little yellow ball, whose sole task in life is to bounce on each square of a gridded



James gets down to some serious cleaning up beneath the waves in *James Pond*

MANIX

landscape and change its colour. Hardly an original scenario, but games like this either win or lose on playability, not originality, and first impressions of this cute puzzler is that it really delivers the goods.

The first landscape is completely flat, but later Filbert has hills and slopes to contend with and his manoeuvres get that little bit more tricky. As the grids themselves are constantly changing, Filbert has to be quick on the bounce to be successful.

While all this is going on, some pretty weird sprites are also up and about; Filbert can eat any of the Gold Coins that bounce with him, gaining extra energy and points, but eating the grenades, funnily enough, can be highly detrimental to his health. In later stages, our fluorescent friend has to contend with bullying Red Viking balls (complete with horned helmet), Robots, Acid, Killer Ninjas and sprouting trees and spikes. Filbert also has to be careful to stay on dry land; bouncing into the sea that surrounds

his land results in loss of life and points.

Graphically, *Manix* is colourful and wonderfully psychedelic with a healthy touch of cute running through all 128 3D isometric screens. The game has a suitably catchy musical backing and the action is augmented by some well weird ditties.

Manix includes a comprehensive game editor option for when you get bored of the three different levels and their various stages and looks like it might become one of the year's silliest and most entertaining games. Fans of arcade style romps that combine a lovable hero with a totally weird theme (and who missed the title on its first release) should look out for it in late September.



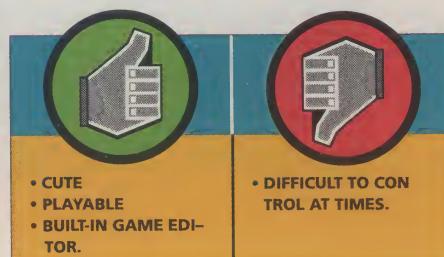
Filbert on the bounce in *Manix*

● Ivan Hawkesley

JAMES, YOU'RE SO CUTE

He's sexy, he's dashing, he's debonair, he's a fish! And his name's Pond.

He stars in a 12 level sub aquatic scenario due out in November for ST and Amiga. It's a very promising looking example of cute, involving the retrieval of radioactive cannisters, plugging leaks in oil tankers, cleaning up the sea bed, and other 'green' objectives. All this is accompanied by eye-poppingly colourful graphics, making *James Pond Underwater Agent* one to look out for...



LABOURS OF HERCULES

And while we're on the Millennium case, *Yolanda*, a (slightly ancient) reissue involving 12 levels of dangerous, sweaty-palmed platform action, is due out in late September.

The game has the heroine of the title struggling to complete the Tasks of Hercules without being destroyed in the process. There are over 50 levels of action and a game trainer option, originally programmed by Steve Bak – but you saw it all back in 1985...or thereabouts! Hmmm...



No. 59,967

THE

LATE LONDON EDITION



London Wedn

THE GREAT ASSAULT SUFFERS MULTIPLE SETBACKS

BAD WEATHER DELAYS TROOPS

MASS ATTACK BY AIRBORNE TROOPS REPELLED

The Allied Expeditionary Army was fighting last night on the beaches of Normandy after attempting the greatest operation of its kind in history.

Heavy casualties were suffered at sea from German shore batteries, and the attempted air invasion was aborted as parachute troops were engaged and shot down as they landed.

Mr. Churchill announced last evening that the sea passage had met with "far greater resistance than had been anticipated" as the

weather in the English Channel deteriorated rapidly, slowing the Allied Forces' progress as they met not the "stiff resistance expected, but a much stronger, and aggressive posture" adopted by German commanders.

German forces were expected only to defend the Fortress of Europe in the face of the concentrated Allied attack on the narrow Cherbourg peninsula. Their tactics of meeting the Allied attacking hordes with split forces on multiple fronts is a reversal of the strategy anticipated, illustrating the flexibility of the Axis forces' battle plans.

Orders issued by the German High Command have shown the highest degree of thought and planning, as far down the chain of command as those given to individual battle units. The front-line units have high morale and are showing great experience in resisting the Allies' invasion. They appear to be utilising the battle tools at their disposal to maximum effect.

It is imperative that the leaders of the Allied Expeditionary Force modify their invasion plans. It is fortunate that, very soon, Rainbird will give them the means to do so.

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ATTEMPTED LANDINGS STALLED

A statement issued from Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force, yesterday, read:-

COMMUNIQUE No. 1

Under the command of General Eisenhower, allied naval forces, supported by light airforces, attempted to land allied armies this morning on the north-western coast of France. Early reports tell of heavy losses in the face of aerial and land based bombardments by Axis forces.

THE KING'S VISIT TO SUPREME H.Q.

BEACH-HEAD REPORTS

The King visited General Eisenhower at Supreme H.Q. Allied Expeditionary Forces yesterday afternoon. He was accompanied by Mr. Winston Churchill, as Minister in Attendance. The King and Mr. Churchill also visited Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory, C-in-C., at his H.Q. of the Allied Air Forces.

The King and the Prime Minister drove together from Buckingham Palace immediately after luncheon, which Mr. Churchill had taken with the King. At the H.Q. the King and the Prime Minister talked to high officers directing operations in the field, and were shown the expected effects of the one hundred variables governing the outcome of the invasion. They were also shown reports coming in from the beaches, and discussed the Production goals which have been set towards building up the ports of Southern England.

ALLIES' TACTICAL MISTAKES

From our Special Correspondent in London

It was becoming apparent in London last night that Allied commanders may well have underestimated the potential of the German Forces, and made serious tactical errors in drawing up their initial battle plans.



EDNEY JUNE 7 1944

TIMES



POSTAGE: INLAND 1d; ABROAD 2d

PRICE 3d

They must now reassess further lines of action in order to take full advantage of the flexibility at their fingertips.

The 'Atlantic Wall' of resistance built by the Germans cannot apparently be surmounted by the single unit attacks launched against it under prevailing conditions. Allied forces are preparing to switch to multiple front attacks with a heightening of aggression. The concentration on viewing the battle at Division Level must be widened to encompass a greater degree of Group Level strategic planning.

Even if such last minute switches in the battle equations prove wise, doubts are surfacing in London over the Allied Forces readiness to encounter all sixteen terrain types if a successful beach-head is established.

Allied command has extensive knowledge of all 'special squares' along the French coast. These are points of major strategic importance such as ports, towns and fortifications. They are gaining up to the minute information on local temperature, climate and wind direction, in addition to the potential capability and strengths of the Axis production ports.

Keeping track of all the factors within the conflict is being made easier by the constant updating of battle reports dispatched from the front, and the inputting



UMS II - Nations At War - incorporates three scenarios, comprising the Assault on Fortress Europe, the Crusades of Alexander the Great, and the Napoleonic Wars. Developed by Intergalactic, the award winning programmers of the original UMS, in conjunction with Rainbird, the Masters of Strategy, UMS II will be available for your Commodore Amiga, Atari ST, IBM PC and compatibles and Apple Macintosh.

of this information into sophisticated pre-drawn battle plans.

So that the early losses which have been suffered may be reversed, and the threat of German counter-invasion may be repelled, Supreme Allied Command are adapting those battle-plans in their Master Control Panel, thought to be a body of men comprising the finest military brains available worldwide.

WAITING FOR THE WORD A VAST GATHERING

FINAL MOVES TO THE SEA

From Our Special Correspondent

An English Port, June 5 1944

The time has come. All we await now is the word to go forth and strike the terrific blow in Western Europe, of which General Montgomery writes in his valediction to the assault troops under his command. When this despatch appears that blow will have been struck; and as one gazes out over an anchorage of fond remembrance in which, framed by the

sweep of England's green shore, countless invasion ships lie at their stations, the mind recoils from the dimensions of it all.

For those tight packed ships represent only one of the rivers of men and machines that all along the coast are pouring out into the sea. Four years ago, almost to the day, the tide of water had flooded from the east into the French channel ports before swirling back on Paris and far beyond. Now the tide has turned, and in this suspended moment of history the first mighty wave is gathered before it crashes down on the enemy's beaches. And the near observer gets no more than the fleeting, awesome glimpse of it that a solitary swimmer would have of a great breaker in an angry sea.

THE MIGHTIEST REWRITE IN HISTORY

The mightiest of all time - such phrases come glibly but say very little. Words, indeed, pale before the vastness of the reality; attempts to convey the sheer depth of strategy fail in prose. To experience is to understand - Nations at War.

Borne of a classic, the original UMS. Imitated but never surpassed. Until now. This fragile planet for which man fights is mapped with precision. From the war-clouds enfolding our Earth to the bloody battlefronts of vulnerable flesh, this is a truly Universal Military conflict. Such an abundance of changeable parameters has never governed the activities of Nations at War before.

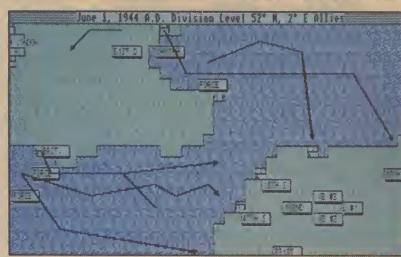
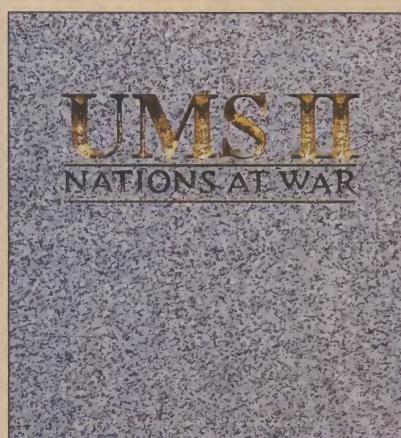
War has winners, but this is no game. It is the greatest wargaming utility. To encompass the the changing political, economic, climatic, geographic and human factors was the Intergalactic goal. At last, perfection is achieved.

Learnt from the lessons of history, from the crusades of Alexander to Napoleon's quest for Europe and beyond, here is the knowledge, requiring only the skill of a would-be Commander of men.

As Allied Supreme Command struggle for the means to reverse the error of their ways, up to fifty people sit down in the hope of rewriting history.

They now have that ability.

UMS II - Nations at War.



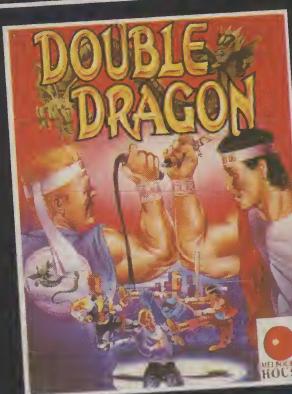
BRILLIANT
AND
AMAZING



DOUBLE DRAGON



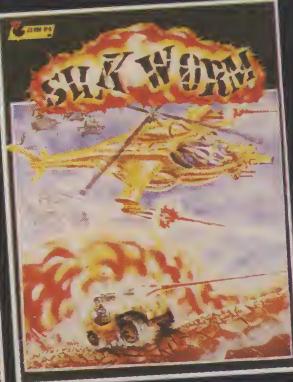
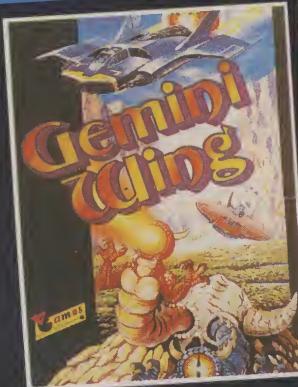
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GEMINI WING TECMO 1988 1989 Virgin Mastertronic Ltd. Produced by THE SALES CURVE LTD for VIRGIN MASTERTRONIC LTD. Coding by IMAGITEC DESIGN • SILKWORM Programmed by Random Access Produced by The Sales Curve Ltd. 1988 TECMO LTD. 1989 VIRGIN MASTERTRONIC LTD. • XENON The Bitmap Brothers 1987-90 1990 Virgin Mastertronic Ltd. • DOUBLE DRAGON A Trade West & Melbourne House Production 1988-90 American Technos Inc. All rights reserved. American Technos Double Dragon 1990 Virgin Mastertronic. • THIS COMPILATION VIRGIN MASTERTRONIC LIMITED 1990

MEETING THE CHALLENGE

Why is PSYGNOSIS is pumping huge amounts of cash into game development?

More sophisticated gameplay, revolutionary new graphics techniques, even better intro sequences – these are just some of the advancements Psygnosis is promising with its next generation of games. ACE readers have already seen *Shadow of the Beast 2*, *The Killing Game Show*, *Awesome*, *Walker* and *Puggsy* back in issue 34. Psygnosis is also working on the games shown here: *Obitus*, *Carthage* and *Nitro*. Look out for full reviews after ACE has played the finished versions.

• Rik Haynes

► **OBITUS** is a radical departure for Psygnosis. Huge fantasy role-playing game with a mixture of gameplay styles and viewpoints. Initially available on Amiga and ST, *Obitus* would benefit from CD-ROM implementation – CDTV version is possible.



► **NITRO** for Amiga and ST. A simple, but very addictive, simultaneous three-player racing game in a similar fashion to Sega's *Hot Rod* coin-op.



► **CARTHAGE**. Strategy wargame set in ancient times. Enlivened by chariot race arcade sequence (shown here) and a fractal-generated map. Out in October on Amiga and ST.



Blasting the 'Butchers of Baghdad'

There's not really much to recommend this game. The unoriginal and repetitive gameplay and the lack of speed and below standard graphics only serve to sink what might have been a good game. Hardened shoot'em-up fans will not be impressed and those by the game will soon find the rotoscoping novelty wearing off.

ACE RATING
613

AMIGA

Reasonable graphics on the title screen give way to very so-so graphics on the actual game. There's not enough in the way of colour or detail, especially on the land and sea below the Harrier jet, and even the missiles and explosions look tame and harmless. The sound is a good standard with a rip-roaring soundtrack and music by Kevin Collier. Game status: finished pre-production game with sound effects and tracks provided on audio cassette.

RELEASE DETAILS

ATARI ST	£TBAdk	September
AMIGA	£TBAdk	September
PC	£TBAdk	September
No other versions planned		

Five years after the controversy of *Raid over Moscow*, US Gold gets topical again, this time with a Middle East shoot'em-up. Are you ready to blast the 'butchers of Baghdad'?

Certain fanatical Middle Eastern powers have acquired nuclear warheads, and now threaten the stability of the world. You're the pilot of the versatile vertical take-off Harrier jet, sailing somewhere in the Middle East onboard a US aircraft carrier. Your job as an ace Harrier pilot is to retrieve the threatening nukes. You can only do this by successfully flying a number of missions against the enemy before going in for the pick-up.

Operation Harrier is designed by Creative Materials (the people who gave you *Rotox*) and uses the same Rotoscape technique. Your jump jet is viewed from above, with everything below it rotating through 360 degrees.

After a mission briefing from the commanding officer (a manic looking fellow), you select the weapons your aircraft will carry for the flight, choosing between heat-seeking missiles or mis-

ROTOX YOUR HARRIER AROUND THE MIDDLE EAST IN US GOLD'S AERIAL SHOOT'EM-UP

siles pods, 500lb or 1000lb bombs. You're shown your jet on the carrier deck, being readied for take-off, then it's thumbs-up, and away you go. Most of the missions are bombing raids against enemy ships and ground targets. You must watch out for enemy jets and helicopters – too many hits from air-to-air missiles, and you'll go down in flames, suffer a soaking and a humiliating dressing-down from your superior. Complete each mission, and you'll have the chance to get the nukes and save the free world.

As aerial shoot'em-ups go, *Operation Harrier* is a disappointment – the scenario and gameplay are very unoriginal. Gameplay and graphics simply become monotonous the more you play the game. The Rotoscape which worked so well in *Rotox*, loses its novelty here, and perhaps should be kept to outer space. If US Gold want to cut it with aerial shoot'em-up fans, it will have to do better than this.

• Ivan Hawksley

KICK OFF 2



Blistering Pace - Pixel Perfect Passing - Superb Tactical Game Play

- ★ 1 to 4 players option (Amiga & ST)
- ★ Kit Design (Amiga, Atari ST & IBM)
- ★ Facility to load Player Manager teams and designed tactics.
- ★ Instinctive joystick controls to pass, dribble, shoot, head or chip a ball and do sliding tackles.
- ★ Two players teams mode against the computer.
- ★ After touch controls to bend or dip the ball.
- ★ Set piece Free Kicks, Corner Kicks, Throw Ins, Injury Time, Action Replay, red & yellow cards indeed host of features to create the atmosphere of a soccer game which is real fun to play.
- ★ League and Cup Competition with sudden deaths penalty shoot out.

THE ONE - Ultimate soccer simulation. 96%.

THE ACE - Brilliant. Buy, Boy, Buy. 930.

AMIGA FORMAT - Best footy game to have appeared on any machine. 94%.

ST FORMAT - What a game! Gem to play. Magic. 90%.

C & VG - Championship winning material. 95%.

GAMES MACHINE - Probably the best sports game ever. 92%.

COMMODORE USER - No other footie game can touch it. 90%.

AMIGA ACTION - Surpasses all other football games. 93%.

POPULAR COMPUTING WEEKLY - Nothing short of brilliant.

NEW COMPUTER EXPRESS - Computer football event of the year.

AMIGA & ATARI ST	£19.99
IBM	T.B.A.
CBM 64, SPECTRUM & AMSTRAD	£9.99 Cas.
CBM 64, SPECTRUM & AMSTRAD	£14.99 Disc
KICK OFF 2 & WORLD CUP(AMIGA & ATARI ST) ..	£24.99
KICK OFF 2 (Expanded Amiga)	£24.99



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It doesn't take much time to make headway in your investigations, and once the thrill of achievement starts racing through your veins, there's no stopping you. The random elements of the game mean that no two games are completely alike, so the game never loses its challenge. One of the small breed of games that you can return to time and time again.

ACE RATING
805

AMIGA

The designers have tried to recreate a 40's murder mystery movie, and they have succeeded. The authentically designed characters, along with the black and white graphics, do well to create the right atmosphere. Sound is strictly limited to a few spot effects, but this doesn't detract from the gameplay. An involving and entertaining product, but one that needs a fair bit of thought to play.

ACE RATING
795

IBM PC

Not a huge deal of difference between this and the other versions. Obviously in the less capable modes, the graphic lose their distinctness, and a lot of the characterisation is lost. The gameplay is identical, however, if not a little on the slow side at times, especially when there are a few moving characters on screen. Still as much of a challenge, though.

RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£19.99 dk	OUT NOW
PC	£24.95 dk	OUT NOW
ST	£19.99 dk	IMMINENT
C64	£9.99 cs £14.99 dk	IMMINENT
No other versions planned		

Hot on heels of the TV appearance of Cluedo comes another mystery, another large aristocratic country house and another murder. A private detective, you have two hours to find the weapon and unmask the criminal.

Initial impressions are highly favourable. There are millions of different possible storylines since all characters and events are randomly generated at the start of the game. This keeps the interest up even after you've cracked it and means

MURDER

US GOLD's cluehunter

ters may be quicker off the mark than you are – leaving the room, for example, just as you've finished telling your character to question them.

Interrogation is simple. You get three menus with lists of all the characters, places and objects in the game. By mixing the three, you can construct some simple questions about specific situations, to which most people will either tell you they saw the butler pick up the wine-glass, or simply that they don't know. The murderer will never incriminate him/herself.

You also need evidence. To finally prove the murderer, you have to match his/her fingerprints to those on the weapon. To do this you have to leave some traps – for example, leaving an object in the vicinity of a suspect (which they will doubtless pick up) enables you to match prints. It's sneaky as hell, but that's half the fun.

Murder is a big game, and one that will take a long time to learn how to play to its fullest. Logical thinking is essential, along with masses and masses of notes. Aspiring Clouseau's might well kill for it.

● Tony Dillon



A typical scene from the game. Any of these people could be the murderer, and is that the weapon on the table?

that, however often you play, your investigations will inevitably follow a shoal of red herrings.

The display shows the room you're in and a set of icons. Clicking on objects and people reveals identities and information, clicking on exits leads you through the house. You can do any number of sleuth-like things via the icons, such as question somebody, dust an object for fingerprints, read/write notes or make an arrest, provided you have the murder weapon as proof.

For a game that looks arcade orientated, you have a lot less actual physical control than you would expect. Everything your character does is the result of a command, which can present annoying timing problems as the other charac-

PLOTTING

OCEAN drop a brick...

Plottin is a simple puzzle game that's nevertheless very tricky in play. In front of you are between 25 and 36 bricks, each marked with one of four designs. You control a little brick carrying potato-like figure, whose aim is to get the number of tiles down to a preset figure by demolishing them. Destroying the bricks is a matter of throwing the one you're currently holding against one of the same pattern. This results in the next brick of a different pattern past the one you destroy flying back into your open hands leaving you to wipe out another.

It sounds easy, but there is one snag. If there are no 'smashable' bricks of the same denomination of the brick you are holding, you lose one of your three lives. The upshot of this is that you have to plan pretty far ahead to ensure that you don't paint yourself into a corner. After a while, obstacles start appearing to stop you from firing in certain places and things get very hairy indeed.



The less than stunning visuals and sound detract from the instant appeal, but you soon find yourself getting into the game. However, the challenge soon dulls, and the game slowly finds its way to the back of the shelf.

ACE RATING
710

ATARI ST

Insofar as aesthetics go, Plotting doesn't really break any boundaries. The display is clean and simple, but a little dull looking. The obligatory cute sprite does enough bouncing and eyeball rolling to be eye-catching, but graphics do not a game make. It plays nicely, but it doesn't really hold the same joystick-wrenching feel as, say, Tetris. Nice, but there is better.

RELEASE DETAILS

ATARI ST	£19.95 dk	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£24.95 dk	OUT NOW
No other versions planned		



In the middle of a hectic two play game. The arrows tell you where your block will hit if you deflect it off the ceiling.

Along with the main game, you get a construction set but the simplicity of the game design is somewhat restricting when it came to creating original screens. For example, there are very strict boundaries as to where you can place blocks and obstructions. For a construction set, you just don't have enough freedom.

Plotting doesn't hold as much in the way of lasting appeal as some other puzzlers. It's difficult to say why, but at the end of the day that magic X-factor that a puzzle game needs to maintain interest simply isn't there. The challenge is there alright, but it just doesn't retain its appeal for long enough.

● Tony Dillon

JUDGE DREDD



I AM THE LAW



AMSTRAD • DISK £14.99
AMSTRAD • CASS £9.99



SPECTRUM +3 • DISK £14.99
SPECTRUM • CASS £9.99



CBM 64 • DISK £14.99
CBM 64 • CASS £9.99

Simulcra is an apparently complex game on first acquaintance, but after a few goes you soon change your ideas. The gameplay is both absorbing and exciting and is going to keep you hooked for some time. In the long term, however, the frustration of not having a password system to enter the higher levels (there are thirty of them) is going to limit enjoyment (but see note in version box below).

ACE RATING
936

ATARI ST
Excellent. Highly recommended to shoot-em-up fans and to ordinary gamblers too. The graphics are perfect - not too pretty but with every pixel giving its all to the gameplay. The version we tested was complete, but after hearing our reservations about the lack of a password system (see PIC Comment above) Microstyle said that if time and RAM allowed a level access system might be implemented.

RELEASE DETAILS

ATARI ST	£24.99	OCT 90
AMIGA	£24.99	OCT 90

No other versions planned

Cyberscape rules in the far future, where even war is played out inside massive computer simulators. A particularly unpleasant virus has, however, had the effect of projecting the combat into the real world and as a result you have hordes of bloodthirsty simulcraft pilots wreaking havoc all over the place. Your objective is to enter the 'battle matrix' and destroy the other craft as well as the matrix itself.

You control a sophisticated Surface Reconnaissance Vehicle (SRV) with swing wings that give it limited flight capabilities. You drive your SRV around the matrix, encountering every so often a thin red line that denotes an energy barrier beyond which you cannot pass. You must then locate the relevant energy projector and destroy it, which will lift the barrier and allow you to proceed.

Simulcra is verging on the awesome, conjuring up immediate comparisons with the classic Virus. Your SRV rotates 360 degrees and can fly or drive. The rotation and shading are excellent and the game has a great feeling of speed. Battle is fast and furious and you can power up the SRV with loads of goodies including speed-ups, radar, fire and forget missiles, target display systems, shields, and extra lives.

The result is a fast paced 3D shoot-em-up that is slightly similar to Resolution 101 in gameplay terms but blends in elements of Falcon and Virus

TECHNO PORN!

The 3D vector graphics system in Simulcra features solid filled 3D graphics with shadows and light intensity surfaces. The system allows solid and wireframe surfaces to be freely mixed. Stipple and transparent/semi-transparent surfaces are also employed.

The game code runs up to 252 non-player objects on the map. The game cycle rate and the view cycle are independent so that game time can be kept more or less constant even if the display rate is slowed down.

Special explosion effects are achieved using a highly efficient particle controller that individually moves up to 100 particles. Definitely a game that goes with a bang!



Simulcra uses a grid-based map similar to Virus but includes 'blank' squares, introducing ground-based and flight action

SIMULCRA

MICROSTYLE hurls you into the computer war of the future and produce a red hot 3D shoot-em-up as an incentive...

as well. In addition, the grid construction introduces a maze element. Sound effects are superb and add to the sensation of speed. There's also a wonderful intro sequence.

Just what a game should be: looks good, sounds good, and plays like a dream.

● Chris Morley

ALL OUT WAR

To add variety to an already exciting game, Microstyle have thrown in a wide variety of enemies. First, and most common, are the laser turrets that slowly sweep in a complete circle until they lock onto you, whereupon they fire viciously. Various ground and air attack craft, such as jeeps and small tanks, race around the walkways, thankfully needing only one shot to kill. Then you reach the megatanks - these can only be killed with missiles, but when shot explode in the most satisfactory way yet, by first ejecting the gun turret and then collapsing in on themselves with a terrific sound effect.

Throughout the game you also have access to a map screen for strategic planning - and there's also a neat power-up that gives you short range mapping/radar facilities while you're moving.



Whilst 'Flying Circus' is certainly not the worst of its type, game-play does leave quite a substantial amount to be desired, in addition to which the sampled effects and cartoon sequences which help to sustain that initial interest, are limited to the 16-bit machines. Try before you buy.

AMIGA

Initial interest may be held by the humour element, supported by very pleasing aesthetics, and whilst the Amiga version is the best of the lot, this seems due to machine capability rather than game-play and as such, the game will still be of limited appeal to any but Python fans. At the end of the day, however, and when all is said and done, which it usually is, and fundamentally speaking, it is a very silly version.

ATARI ST

Although playing identically to the Amiga version, the ST version of Flying Circus suffers slightly from somewhat below par sampled effects, with significant background interference although this does not detract from the game-play by any means. Other than this small niggle, both 16-bit versions are comparable to one another.

SPECTRUM

Suffering from the same game-play problems as the Amiga version with the added disadvantage of monochrome graphics. Sadly, the 8-bit machine also loses out on the cartoon sequences and the sound samples too are only notable for their absence. However, the quality of the caricatures is well preserved and what sound effects there are fit the game well.

AMSTRAD CPC

A bit disappointing this one. It lacks the aesthetic appeal of the 16-bit versions because of simplistic graphics and garish use of colour. Very silly. Especially as it makes the characters unrecognisable at times. Even sillier. Couple all this with a lack of samples and some rather basic sound effects and you get a game for mice, not men. Or is that men, not mice. And why hasn't the doctor called yet? Ah! I am the doctor...

SPAM 1

Probably the silliest version of the lot. The copy protection system, involving a small metal key, almost always results in either a fatal system crash or - in some cases - mice. Once into the game, the limitations of the round-edged, cubic format become immediately apparent and lasting interest is considerably reduced by the appearance of green mould. Great sandwich, shame about the game.

RELEASE DETAILS

Platform	Price	Release Status		
ATARI ST	£19.99	IMMINENT		
AMIGA	£19.99	IMMINENT		
IBM PC	£24.99	IMMINENT		
AMSTRAD CPC	£9.99	£14.99	dk	IMMINENT
C64/128	£9.99	£14.99	dk	IMMINENT
SPECTRUM	£9.99	£14.99	dk	IMMINENT
SPAM 1	£9.99	£14.99	pq	MAYBE

No other versions planned

Dead parrots, spam, lumberjacks, and the Spanish Inquisition set the scene for this licensed spin-off from the '70s TV series once regarded by the BBC as having absolutely no chance of commercial success.

The plot revolves around one of Python's much loved characters, the moustachioed D.P. Gumby, complete with knotted handkerchief on top, who is searching for four separate pieces of his brain, tragically lost during routine surgery. Despite the fact that the brains themselves are quite content to lead their own successful lives, Gumby is determined to retrieve them in a vain attempt to further his dreams and ambitions.

MONTY PYTHON'S FLYING CIRCUS

Gumby loses his mind

Encounter death, persecution, and fluffy pillows as VIRGIN introduces the first game where successful players get lower scores

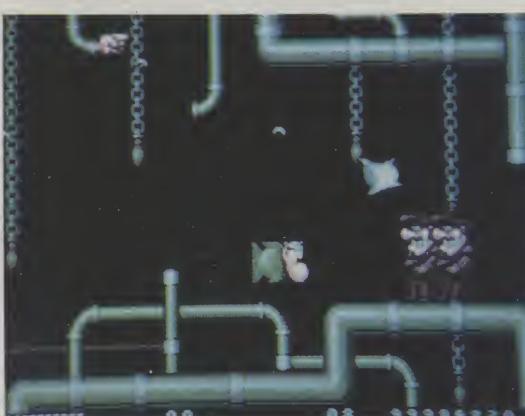
The scoring system is in keeping with the overall feel of the game in that your score begins at 99,999,999 and actually counts down, extra lives being gained for every 10,000,000 points lost!

Immediately the game begins you are required to pass through what Virgin have dubbed a "Cheeselok" protection system –

enter the correct names for two out of sixteen cheeses or the game locks up. Having passed through this, you are then treated to a sample of John Cleese's voice welcoming you to "Monty Python's Flying Circus". Sound is of a high quality throughout, with several well sampled effects and pieces of dialogue taken directly from the series, whilst graphics, although not perhaps the greatest ever witnessed on the Amiga convey the cartoon quality of Terry Gilliam's animations to a tee. Indeed, cartoons play a large part in the game itself as 16-bit versions are interspersed with excellent sketches from the series, (although these have the ability to be turned off along with sound in the event of annoyance).

However, graphics and sound do not a classic make and whilst perhaps initially aesthetically pleasing, Flying Circus delivers nothing new on the gameplay front.

● Alex Ruranski



The Spanish Inquisition – you're being pelted with deadly fluffy pillows

Plot aside, the game itself requires you to guide Gumby through four levels of scrolling landscape blasting all in your path and collecting various objects along the way. Aggravation comes in the form of characters from various Python sketches (such as Norman the Half-Bee, Upper-Class Twits and the aforementioned dead parrot), whilst collectables take the form of eggs, sausages (used to replenish Gumby's energy) and the inevitable Spam. Spam is the key to Gumby's quest – every sixteen tins collected gets you one of the four pieces of brain.

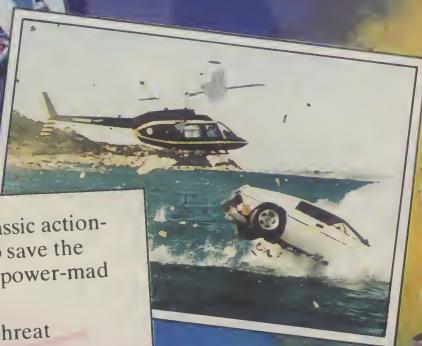
At the end of each level, food collected is counted down for bonus points, whilst 16-bit versions of the game allow you to engage in a pointless argument with a Minister for Pointless Arguments for an extra bonus, (achieved by moving the joystick in the opposite direction to that which the Minister's speech bubble appears).



Watch out for falling weights. And just to make matters worse, you're being followed by a nervous bush ...

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Programmed by: The Kremlin

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Amiga & Atari ST Screenshots

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Player Manager



Player Information	
Position	Defender
Age	31
Height	1.76 cm
Weight	80 Kg
Pace	106
Ability	109
Stamina	85
Resilience	184
Aggression	41
Done	



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PLAYER MANAGER + KICK OFF 2 A WINNING COMBINATION

by Dino Dini

ST ACTION: The presentation has to be the best I have ever seen in any management game. Combining the compelling game play of Kick Off with the strategy of team management was a stroke of pure genius.

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THE ACE: The beauty of the Player Manager is that it successfully blends a challenging soccer management game with the frantic end to end arcade action of Kick Off. Designers have been trying to marry arcade footy with management for years – almost always failing abysmally. Player Manager brings it off in style.

NEW COMPUTER EXPRESS: The sheer depth of Player Manager is incredible. Almost every conceivable element of running and playing in a football team has been implemented including Kick Off. Anco has produced what has to be a definitive Manager game.

COMMODORE USER: One of the most impressive options yet seen on a managerial game and the keystone to the addictiveness and involvement of this game is Tactics option. P.M. lets you plan all your set pieces just the way you want them. You will never be able to say you aren't in full control of the game. At last a management game that requires true management skills. Add to this most addictive arcade soccer game ever – a winner.

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SILENT SERVICE II

MICROPROSE runs silent, deep and deadly

From its very outset, *Silent Service II* is typically Microprose: vast scenario, hugely complex gameplay and intense attention to detail. If ever there was a game that demanded significantly more than fast reflexes and a happy trigger finger, this is it.

Set against the historical backdrop of World War II, the program gives you the opportunity of recreating, in whole or in part, the career of a US submarine officer. This represents anything from thirty minutes to hundreds of hours of game time, supported by a 128 page manual, keyboard overlay with 70 commands, and dozens of mission possibilities.

Once through the obligatory security check (where you must correctly identify one of eleven Japanese warships), you are met with a massive array of options. The first of these presents you with four distinct game scenarios (see Battle Stations); others include selecting one of four difficulty levels (ranging from the complete novice, to the 'Ultimate'

player), starting date for engagement, submarine class (the latter two options are vital to one another as the chosen date dictates the sophistication of the submarine allowed) and even torpedo type!

Subsequent options presented to the player during the game depend heavily upon those chosen at the outset, leading to many possible situations. A typical battle scenario can involve close combat with dozens of marauding Japanese warships at short range, giving rise to much panic on the part of the player! Gameplay tends to alternate between the Bridge Screen (where you sight your targets) and the Map Screen which

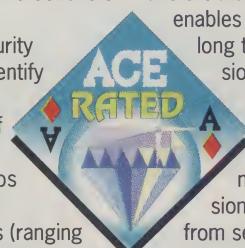
enables you to make more long term strategic decisions.

Apart from actually controlling your ship, there are numerous intermission scenes ranging from seeing your torpedoes launched to monitoring the Captain's Log.

Aesthetically, *Silent Service II* is of a high standard throughout with digitised illustrative screens and well drawn, easily readable displays. In addition to this, each enemy ship is portrayed from a digitised photograph in any one of 24 perspectives for added feel.

One minor niggle involves continual disk access, in that accidentally pressing a key can involve waiting while the machine goes through its paces, although the ability to turn off certain animation screens helps solve this. That apart, *Silent Service II* is a must for all fans, and a worthy successor to the original, which has now sold so well that it is being converted to console!

• Alex Ruranski



With such a vast array of options and several difficulty settings, the game caters for both the complete novice and the hardened expert, providing the potential for literally hundreds of hours of absorbing play. Slow to get into due to the complexity, but for the dedicated player there's months of long term interest.)



IBM PC

Supports VGA/MCGA CGA and EGA graphics, whilst sound options are supported by the Ad Lib and Roland MT-32 Sound units including digitised speech. Apart from the disk access, the game makes excellent use of the PC and has all the right ingredients you'd expect from the successor to what was previously THE submarine sim.

RELEASE DETAILS

IBM PC

£39.99

OUT NOW

No other versions planned at present.

BATTLE STATIONS

The four scenarios in *SSII* should keep even the most ardent skipper busy for months to come.

First, TRAINING involves simple cruise and attack sequence in the vicinity of four unarmed freighter hulls. Its purpose is to familiarise you with the craft, the manual and the controls.

Then, there's SINGLE COMBAT, which isn't actually single at all, but drops you into one of nine engagements, eight of which are historically based. The ninth is a random encounter with a Japanese force.

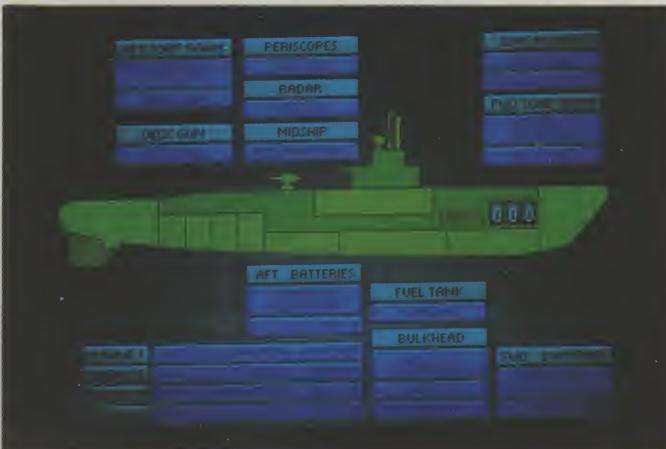
SINGLE WAR PATROL propels you into the Western Pacific, hunting down the opposition, engaging them and returning to base.

Finally, there's the big one - a complete WAR CAREER. You join as a Skipper at any time during WW2, sail a series of war patrols in one or more boats, and finish up in either the grave or the victory parade. Microprose claims this final option could involve literally hundreds of hours of gameplay if you start at the beginning of the war in 1941.

All options pit you against Japan - America's mortal enemy after the raid on Pearl Harbour in 1941 until the end of the war following the atomic bombings of 1945. The struggle with Japan sprawled across the western half of the Pacific and among America's "Silent Service" heroes were men with silly names like "Mush" Morton, Dick O'Kane and Red Ramage! Now you can join them...



The Bridge Screen. Although this is where you sight your target, you can also access all pertinent information systems from this screen.



Damage control reports are comprehensive. Rapid action is needed if repairable damage is not to become an irreparable disaster

PROFESSOR MARIARTI

KRYSLIS send you blasting and puzzling into a mad professor's laboratory

ry

Professor Mariarti has been instructed by Local Government and, as the Prof, you have to race about the flip screen map solving any problems in typical platform-game style. Your objective on each of the five levels is to reach the switch and cut the power. The problems are based around using particular objects in particular situations, such as wearing a divers helmet in a pressurised room.

Wandering about the rooms of the labs are the Prof's creations, which range from the predictable (marauding robots) to more exotic pools of roaming slime. These can be either stunned or destroyed, depending on the creature and/or which weapon you are currently carrying. They don't disappear for long though, so this only really serves as a short breather.

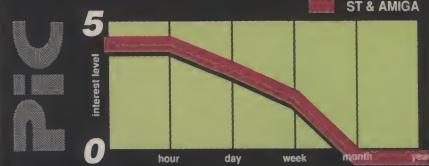
Platform games need to be pretty spectacular these days to make any headway. Krisalis wanted "...a game that had a hint of familiarity to it. Platform games are one of the most overdone genres of game, and we wanted a game that people could relate to. After all, one game I still play is Manic Miner!"

Unfortunately, Mariarti has a fair few shortcomings. First off, there's the simplicity of the puzzles. It doesn't take an O Level in Egg Boiling to work out that the way to get past an electrified grid is to switch off the machine next to it.

There are one or two playability problems as well. The most frustrating is the double jump, obtained by keeping the joystick in the required direction. Unless you're very careful, this often results in you jumping onto a platform or ladder, and then leaping straight off again.

With a bit more spit and polish in the design department, Mariarti could have been great. As it stands now, it's only good for an hour or two on Sunday lunchtime.

● Tony Dillon



An attractive game initially, and one that is very easy to pick up. However, as you start making progress, frustration with the playability sets in – especially the double-jump. The simplicity of the game also means that it doesn't take long to work your way through it. Not the most lasting of products.

ACE RATING
645

PICTURE
G IO A FF

ACE RATING
630

PICTURE
G IO A FF

AMIGA

Graphically identical to its ST counterpart, the Amiga version is only marginally improved by the horizontal scrolling and the improved sampled sounds. Vertical movement is still flip screen, and the same playability problems occur. Pity, really – the idea of bringing out a really red-hot platform scenario for the Amiga is very appealing.

ATARI ST

Bright and clean graphics, but there is very little distinction between the fore- and background, making it very hard at times to spot platforms. The real letdown is the four-way flip screen, which often causes death as you step onto a new screen and straight into the arms of a passing alien. Otherwise a rather unexceptional platform scenario.

RELEASE DETAILS

ATARI ST	£19.99	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£19.99	OUT NOW
No other versions planned		



'A very useful switch' the game tells you...but is it telling the truth?

TIME MACHINE

Zany professor puzzler from ACTIVISION

Professor Potts is working on his time machine when terrorists strike and blow it to smithereens. The unfortunate Potts is hurtled back in time warp and must use his ingenuity to recreate history, return to his own era, and stop the terrorists in their tracks.

You control the Professor with your joystick as he wanders around prehistoric forests, swamps and jungles trying to figure a way back to his own era, 10 million years in the future. You've



Your teleporting units can switch you instantly between two locations, together with any object in your immediate vicinity. Here you're capturing livestock to develop into cavemen.



High initial attraction due to the attractive graphics and animation grows higher as you appreciate the originality of the scenario. After a day, however, you're likely to have got the hang of the game and be tackling the trickier puzzles. Repetitive gameplay then begins to frustrate until the final solution KO's the interest level...

ACE RATING
800

PICTURE
G IO A FF

AMIGA

Graphics are extremely attractive, with prehistoric lifeforms showing the distinct influence of 20th century art. Sound is nothing to sing about. Control methods are slightly annoying as they involve constant use of both joystick and keyboard, as you often have to move through time and space simultaneously. Otherwise absorbing and original.

RELEASE DETAILS

ATARI ST	£24.99	IMMINENT
AMIGA	£24.99	OUT NOW
C64/128	£14.99	IMMINENT
No other versions planned		

got two useful gadgets to help you – a couple of teleportation pods to move around with and a zapper to stun creatures and dislodge objects.

World history in this game is divided into five zones, each with five screens showing a single location from a wraparound map. If you can help along the course of evolution in one zone, you'll gain access to the next and so on until you reach the present day.

Time Machine is a tough brain teaser involving constant movement between different locations and time zones to solve the puzzles. For example, a bridge over a river in one time zone can only be constructed using an object from another area in another zone. Live is made more difficult by constant hazards that not only threaten your energy levels but may also undo your work, causing a time zone to 'collapse' and forcing you to start all over again.

Graphically, Time Machine is nicely presented, with colourful scenes of the various zones from prehistoric swamps, right up to the Professor's laboratory compound. The Prof himself is a classic boffin with white coat and flaming red Einstein hairstyle, and he moves around the scenery in the usual joystick assisted way.

The challenge of this game is almost entirely confined to puzzle solving, and some of them are extremely difficult. Super resourceful whiz-kids might make short work of the game, and be done with it, but more average brains like me will find it a real teaser and be hooked for quite a while. Once cracked, however, it will hold no further interest at all.

● Ivan Hawksley

HE'S BACK! HE'S BACK! HE'S BACK!

Miss G Style

RICK DANGEROUS

2



Rick Dangerous II.
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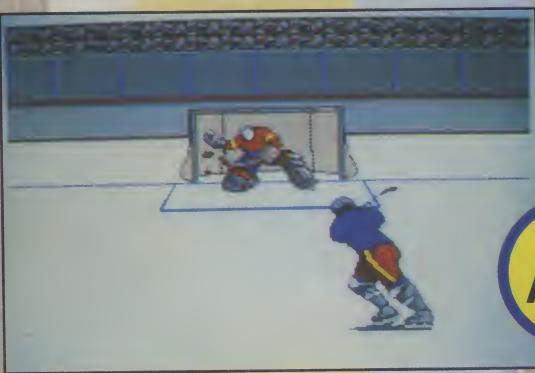
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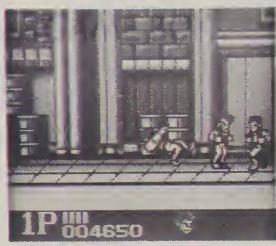


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TECHNOS
kicks it
on the
Gameboy

Kicking butt in DOUBLE DRAGON.

DOUBLE DRAGON

Forget teenage tortoises, take control of Billy – the baseball bat brawler – in this quest to rescue his girlfriend from the Black Warriors street gang.

Double Dragon, the popular martial arts coin-op, has been converted over to Gameboy. Split into four missions, you travel the city slums, warehouse and forest to reach your final destination – the hideout. Along the way you meet and dispatch whip wielding women, knife throwing punks and various heavy duty 'boss' dudes.

The Gameboy version is much easier to play. Unlike the original coin-op you automatically get



Double Dragon is easily the best beat'em-up released on the Gameboy thus far. Sprite and backdrop graphics are intricate with a high degree of detail. Boss sprites are big, the vertical and horizontal scrolling is smooth. Soundtracks can become rather irritating, but the sound effects have punchy impact. Sure, this version is easy to complete – but you'll have lots of fun in the process. The link-up mode is just beyond the beat. Double Dragon – get ready to take it out!

the full force of martial manoeuvres: punch, uppercut, elbow punch, over the shoulder throw, kick, jump kick, low kick, kick in the head and spin kick. Your opponents aren't quite as tough as their arcade parents. Guys like Abobo, Lopar, Chintai and The Williams can be taken out with minimum motion. You still pick up weapons like the knife, baseball bat and grenade to distribute some destruction. A link-up option lets you simultaneously kick ass with a friend – provided they've also got a Gameboy and copy of the game.

Double Dragon is the nearest a beat'em-up game has come to a martial arts movie. Get set for some serious slapping.

● Rik Haynes

LYNX FOUR-PLAY

Special thanks to ASCII Corporation.



PAPERBOY. Looking larger than life and very colourful.



ROADBLASTERS. Conversion of the Atari arcade racing-sim shoot'em-up.



RYGAR. Hip hack and scrolling slash.



PAPERBOY is a unique game using Zaxxon-style pseudo-3D graphics on a 45° top-right to bottom-left scroll.



VINDICATORS. Tengen tanks drive through alien-infested mazes.

PAPERBOY

A new Gameboy delivery from MINDSCAPE

His baby has been doing the rounds for years, and very successfully doing the do too! Originally a hit coin-op from Atari, Paperboy has been converted to everything from the Spectrum to Lynx... and now the Gameboy.

Delivering newspapers in the good old US of A is pretty treacherous for apprentice paperboys. Before you set out, you're shown a route

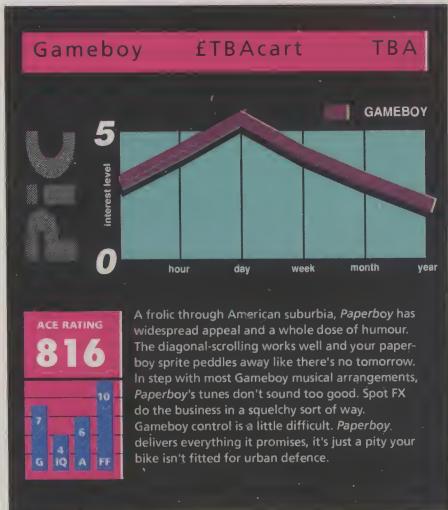
plan displaying where your customers live. Then it's out onto the streets. Hey, be careful out there!

You score points by delivering papers to your customers, if you don't, they drop their subscription. This ain't good business, buddy. For bonus points you smash the windows of non-customers (unfortunately you don't see them break in the Gameboy version).

Like real-life things aren't this simple. Various suburban obstacles stand in the way of you collecting your pay cheque. Skateboarders, breakdancers, dogs, fences, manholes, cars, tombstones, fire hydrants, garbage cans, tornadoes and the grim reaper are there to lose you a life if you collide with them.

If you survive your round intact, a training course track helps you keep in trim for next mornings deliveries. Who said being a Paperboy is easy? If you can't cut it you can always work for a fast-food chain.

● Rik Haynes



A frolic through American suburbia, Paperboy has widespread appeal and a whole dose of humour. The diagonal-scrolling works well and your paperboy sprite paddles away like there's no tomorrow. In step with most Gameboy musical arrangements, Paperboy's tunes don't sound too good. Spot FX do the business in a squeaky sort of way. Gameboy control is a little difficult. Paperboy delivers everything it promises, it's just a pity your bike isn't fitted for urban defence.



Newspaper articles display your progress through PAPERBOY.

GAUNTLET

US GOLD
attempts an
amazing feat
on the Sega
Master
System



Fighting the ghosts, demons and Dr Death in GAUNTLET.

When Atari launched this four-player coin-op back in 1985 it created a new arcade craze. People of all ages – and both sexes – could quickly master *Gauntlet*'s easy to learn display, controls and tasks. An arcade sensation was started.

Everything is kept simple in *Gauntlet*. Choosing between an elf, wizard, valkyrie or warrior character – you wander round a maze searching for treasure and the nearest exit. Enter this exit and it's onto... yet another maze. There are 128 maze levels to master. Like most mazes, each is populated by monsters, tasty treasures and secret passages.

But boring it is not. In each maze you discover horrible beasties, ghouls and demons out to decrease your health rating. If this reaches zero, you're history. You keep the beasts at bay with your bow and arrow, sword, axe or wand – depending on the character you've chosen. You can also fight by hand – but this takes time and

isn't as healthy. Help comes in the form of collectibles like magic potions to stun the suckers, food to boost your health, and keys to unlock gates. Don't be too greedy though, pigging out on the pick-ups can seriously damage your health. Every so often, you visit a treasure room – collecting as many cash chests as possible within the time limit.

Gauntlet graphics are displayed in a slightly off-beat overhead style. The screen scrolls smoothly in eight directions and a status display on the right shows your score, health and what collectibles you're carrying. Sprites are small but highly detailed. Sound supply is standard spot effects.

Two players can simultaneously play *Gauntlet*. You can either assist or hinder your colleague. If you want a laugh, do both. The Sega Master version contains a few changes to the coin-op. Instead of individual player speeds you get differing rates of fire, and the thief has been replaced by potion penalties. So what? Sega Master *Gauntlet* is an accurate conversion of a fun fantasy shoot'em-up. Go grab yourself some maze.

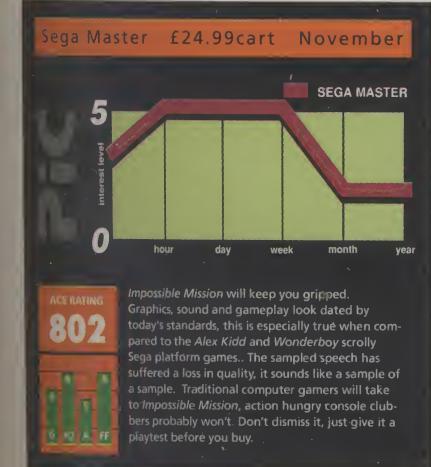
• Rik Haynes



A C64 classic converted onto the Sega Master System by US GOLD

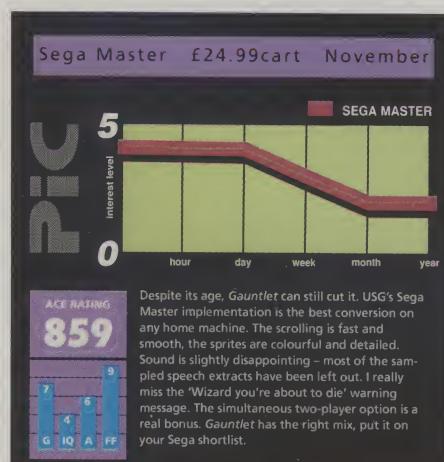
Looks like our hero is heading for the candy... a Mission Impossible?

IMPOSSIBLE MISSION



"Another visitor. Stay awhile. Stay forever." Not the most inviting greeting you could wish from a game. *Impossible Mission*, inspired by the 1960's TV spy-shows, places you in the role of a secret agent out to stop the world-dominating plans of Professor Elvin. A secret password has been dissected into 36 pieces and scattered throughout Elvin's HQ. You must infiltrate his complex, find the password pieces, reassemble them, defeat the evil Elvin and save the world. By the way, you've only got six hours to do it.

"Destroy him my robots." Travelling via elevators, you visit a myriad of rooms – packed with deadly security robots – to find the puzzle pieces hidden away in household items like desks, sofas, bathtubs, bookcases and candy vendors. Each room is depicted as a multitude



WIN A BOTTLE OF CHAMPAGNE

Gauntlet on the Sega Master System was coded by a very capable chap. Tony Porter now has nine *Gauntlet* conversions in his programming portfolio. The game took six months to write using the standard Sega development kit – a PC with ICE (In-Circuit Emulator). "Sega Master *Gauntlet* is the best home version available including the 16-bit adaptions. Everything runs in 4/50th of a second – it's probably faster than the coin-op," states Porter. "Due to tight video chip access time, the monster illustrations don't run as fast as they ought to." Even so, there can be up to 160 monsters and 20 missiles on-screen at the same time.

There is a secret cheat mode hidden in the Sega Master version of *Gauntlet*. The first ACE reader to find it will win a bottle of champagne courtesy of the generous Tony Porter – and he promises it won't be a cheap Albanian import. Send your entries to: CHAMPAGNE CHAMP, ACE, EMAP Images, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

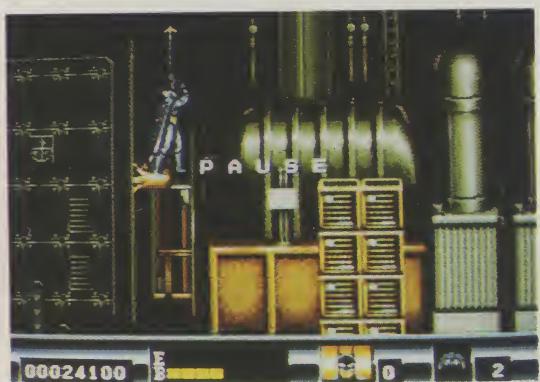


of platforms and lifts, with you leaping around – avoiding robots and searching objects. There are many types of robot, each with their own movement patterns. Most are armed with electric rays. Some stand still, others home in on you, and the top of the range models move faster than you. You'll soon learn the robo patterns – don't make any hasty moves until you've sussed what type of robot you're dealing with. Computer terminals can provide platform resets and snoozes to temporarily stun the robots in a room.

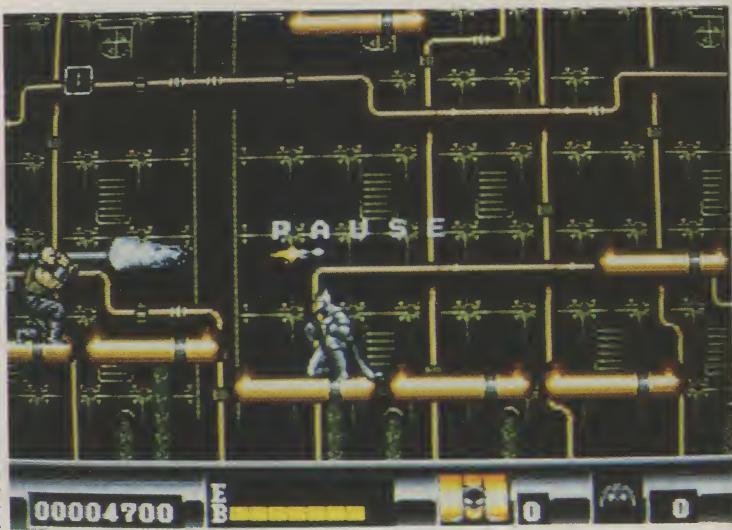
"Aaargh!" Contact with a robot or its electro-beam spells your death, as does falling off the bottom of the screen. Every time you lose a life, ten minutes are knocked off your time limit. The password portion of the game is like a jigsaw puzzle. Randomly selected each time you play, the password is nine letters long. Each letter is formed by overlaying and correctly orientating four pieces of puzzle. Elvin's room layouts are random for each game, giving *Impossible Mission* an edge over other platform titles.

Call me nostalgic. Call me virtual. I hope someone, somewhere, someday develops a virtual reality version of *Impossible Mission*. It would make a perfect VR game.

• Rik Haynes



Batman throws his bat hook to the ceiling in an attempt pull himself out of trouble.



One of Jack's henchmen levels a bazooka at the Caped Crusader in the chemical factory.

00004700 E B 0 0 0

SUNSOFT spreads its Batwings over the Megadrive...

The head honchos at Sunsoft must be rubbing their hands with glee and mouthing something like 'Holy Bat Dosh' as they count the lolly rolling in from the proceeds of two smash-hit Nintendo versions of the Batgame. This Megadrive version looks like being the best quality version of the game so far, thanks to the Megadrive's superior specifications, and will doubtless keep the Batdosh winging its way into Sunsoft's coffers.

Based loosely on selected scenes from last summer's film, the game challenges the Caped Crusader to do battle with Jack and his henchmen in various locations around Gotham City.

Batty has never looked better in a computer game. From the opening sequence when he leaps in with his cape flying in the breeze he is every inch the Acrobatic Avenger.

After a tough opening punch-up in the seedier ghettos of Gotham City, Batman finally tracks Jack to a chemical factory where he may succeed in dumping the arch villain into a vat of deadly acid. It looks like curtains for the super villain - but don't you believe it. Pretty soon Jack has recovered from the acid and is up to his old tricks again. This provides the excuse for a series of challenges - in the Guggenheim Museum, on The Freeway (firing missiles from the Batmobile) and finally in the skies above Gotham City.

Lots of Bat-symbol power-ups are to be grabbed as you travel the environs of Gotham City. Bat energy is the principle commodity to get your hands on since preserving as many Bat-lives as possible for the tougher end of level challenges is the only way to proceed.

Batman will test a variety of your arcade skills. The opening platform-style gameplay in the chemical factory seems tough until you master the use of the Batrope and the leaping mechanism. One early leap seems impossible until you experiment with aerial

BATMAN

NINTENDO PRICES DOWN

Giant Japanese toy company Bandai have taken over from Serif Games as the official UK distributor of Nintendo games - a move that will have far reaching effects for all Nintendo and would-be Nintendo owners.

According to industry news paper Computer Trade Weekly the switch happened as Nintendo prepared to turn up the heat in the battle for the European video games market. Bandai already distribute the Nintendo in Germany and France and were not cowed by the huge sums needed to finance the bid for the UK market - believed to be upwards of twenty million pounds.

Punters will make a quick gain from this increased competition with a price cut on Nintendo hardware which should be effective by the time you read this. A special Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Pack will sell for just £79.99 with the Action Set Bundle falling to £99.99. Gameboy prices are also set to fall when the popular handheld is officially launched in the UK the same month. The bad news is that neither Bandai or Nintendo are announcing any changes

MEGADRIVE £39.99 cart OUT NOW

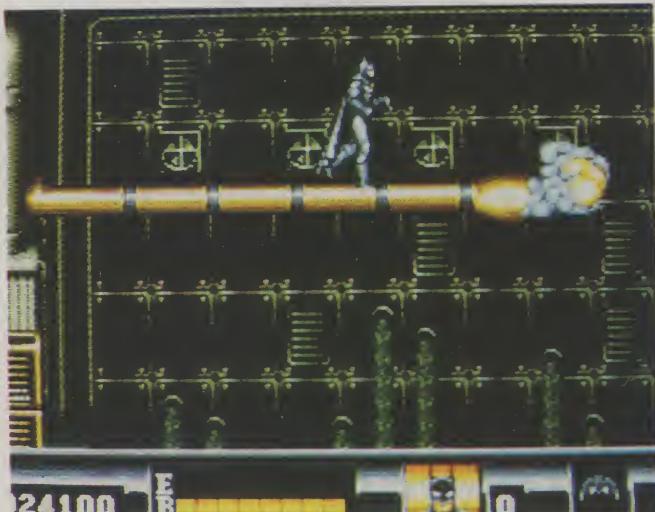


As the curve above illustrates, Batman scores very highly in the addition stakes early on but then falls back rapidly in the medium term - reaching zero a bit too quickly than one would like. The arcade puzzles lack the original twists and quirks that are necessary in every new arcade game if it is to fox you for long, though this is compensated for initially by the sound and graphic attractions. Sheer Bat-appeal keeps you hooked - but not long enough for the asking price.

somersaults. The other areas are more simple - road racing and sky fighting.

Overall the atmosphere of the Batman film comes across very strongly both in graphics and in sound. The gameplay won't win any awards - basically an amalgam of various tried and tested, dated even, arcade challenges. That said, it is still the most comic-like interactive manipulation of Batman you are likely to get, short of becoming a multi-millionaire and building your own Bat theme park. Holy Bat dosh - now there's an idea

● Eugene Lacey



That pipe is about to explode and Batty will have to spread his cloak and make a leap.

SEGA GIVE YOU FIVE

Whilst 'What Nintendo Will Do Next' continues to be the main topic of conversation in the video game business, Sega are steadily building their games library for the Master System - already far larger than the Nintendo equivalent.

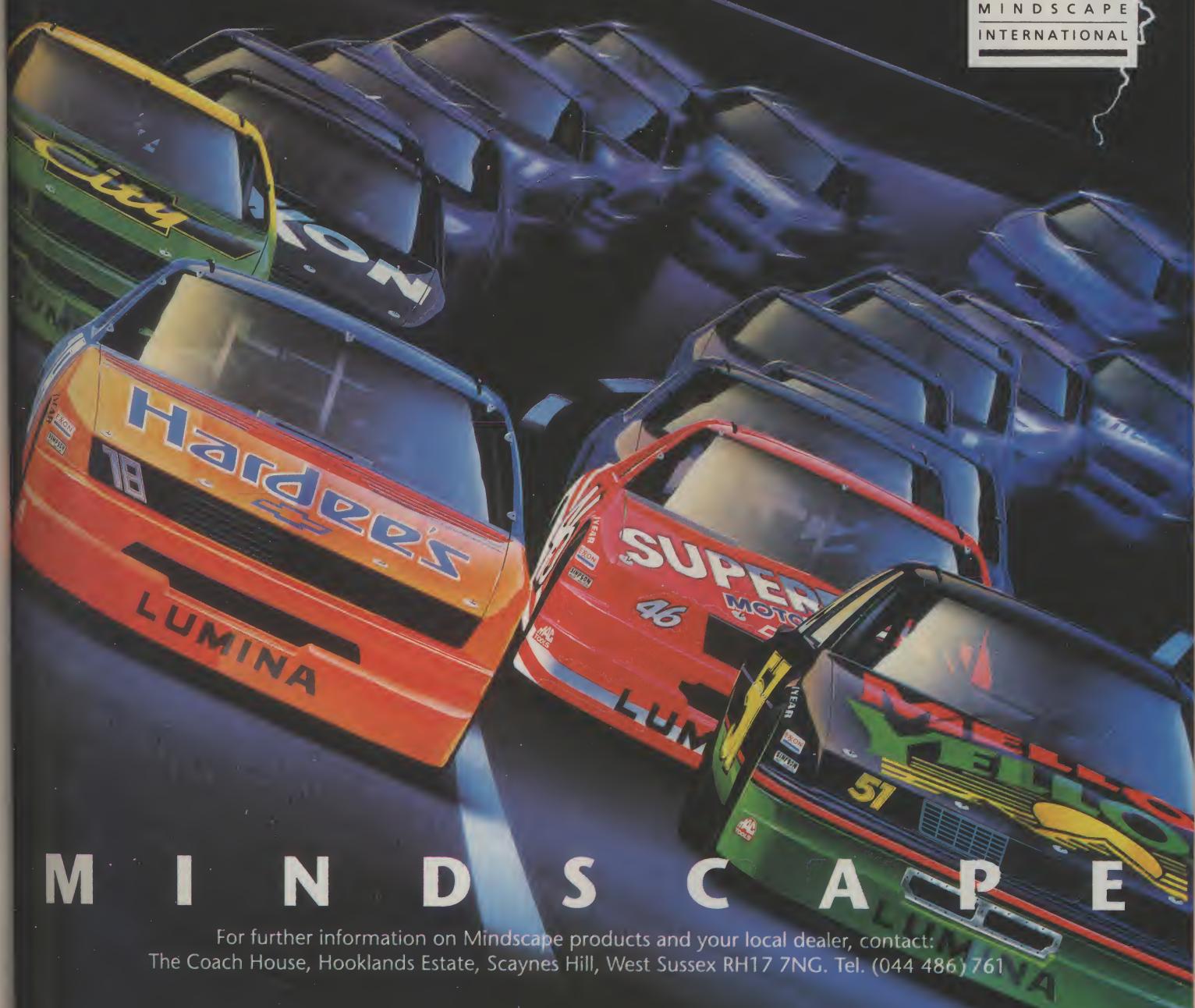
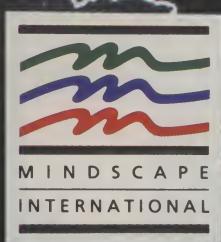
This month see's the launch of five new cartridges - ESWAT (reviewed this month on the Megadrive), Danan - a jungle role playing game, Columns - a Tetris-type puzzle game, racing coin-op conversion Super Monaco Grand Prix, and platform game Alex Kidd in Shinobi World.

Sega expect to launch at least two new titles a month between now and Christmas with further titles coming out from independent software houses.

DAYS OF *Thunder*

TM

The game of the film!



M I N D S C A P E

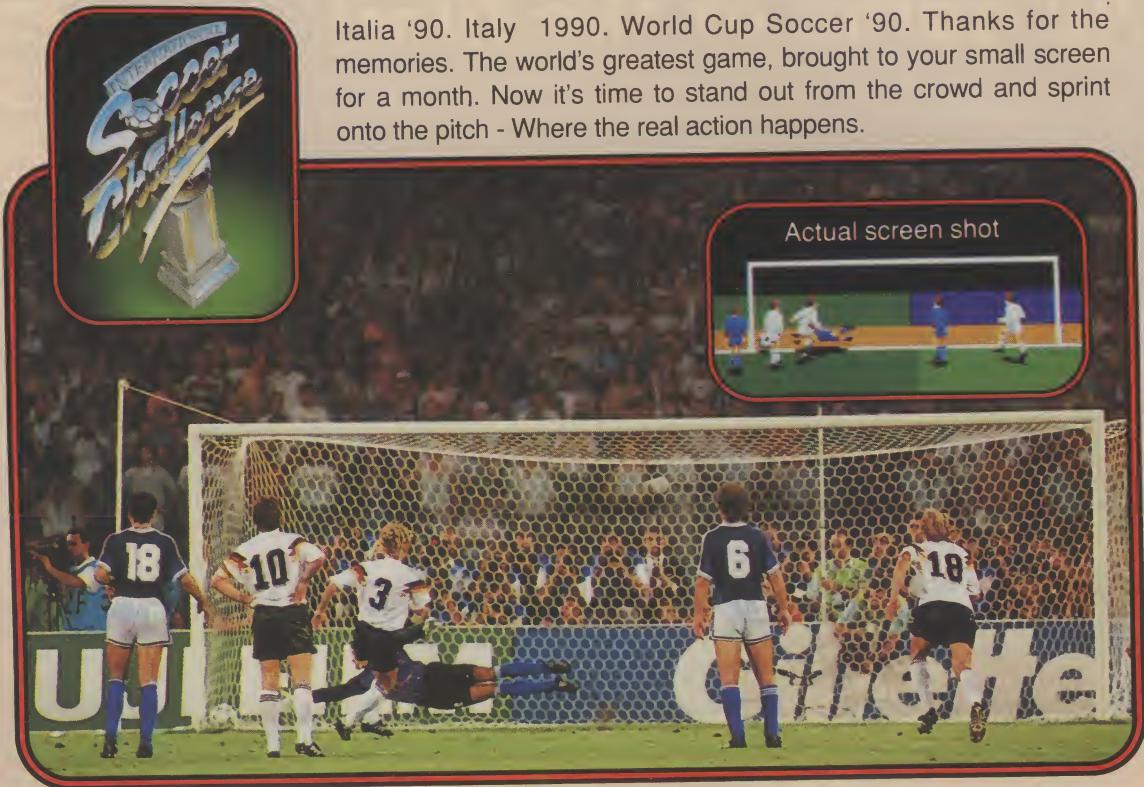
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THE COMPETITION'S OVER AND HERE'S THE WINNER

Andreas Brehme scores the winner, World Cup Final, July 1990. MicroStyle introduce the winner, Autumn 1990.



Tackle hard for the ball, deep in your own half, and send an inch-perfect pass wide to the winger. As he takes on the full-back, you're sprinting down the middle, screaming for the return.

The ball swings across, high above the defence, as you stretch your legs to their limit. One bounce and you let fly with your boot as the goal looms before you, sending the ball fizzing towards the top corner...

International Soccer Challenge is viewed from the players' perspective at pitch level, giving you fast-flowing three-dimensional action that you control as you wish.

- Play in position as a goal-hungry striker, midfield general or unshakable defender, feeding off the passes of intelligent computer aided team-mates.
- Dictate the whole pattern of play, utilising teamwork to perfection by controlling all eleven men.
- Take charge of intricate set-piece moves from throw-ins, corners and free-kicks.

- Play in the World Cup Finals or as a member of the top sixteen Club sides from around the globe. International football as it is played for real.
- International Soccer Challenge. It will make Gascoigne weep with joy, get Marradonna excited, and have Hullit tearing his hair out.

AVAILABLE SOON FOR YOUR COMMODORE AMIGA, ATARI ST AND IBM PC COMPATIBLES FROM ALL GOOD SOFTWARE STORES.

**INTERNATIONAL SOCCER CHALLENGE FROM
MICROSTYLE - IT'S A WHOLE DIFFERENT BALL GAME !**

PHANTASY STAR II

Phantasy Star II is an American import of a role playing game very much in the Japanese style. Even the facial characteristics of the heroes have that strange huge-eyed, part European and part oriental look which is peculiar to Japanese video game heroes.

The countless references in the manual to "The Genesis" refer to the American name for the Megadrive. This is no problem as it works just as well on the English machine.

The storyline is fairly familiar. In a distant corner of the universe three planets are in orbit around the beautiful star Algo. Palm is the economic and intellectual centre of the solar system, Mota the agricultural planet and Dezo is a mystery – and furthest from the Algo Star.



Our heroes receive some good advice in their home town in *Phantasy Star II*.

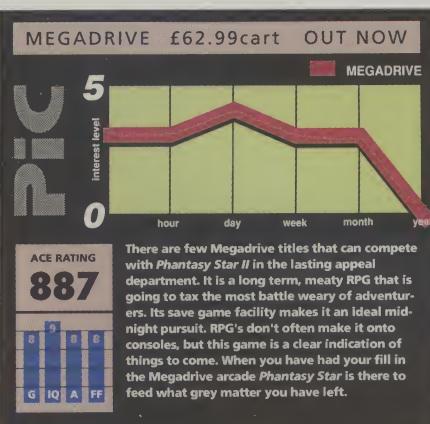
Role playing receives the Megadrive treatment

The adventure begins on the idyllic farming planet of Mota. The all-powerful Mother Brain controls everything on Mota – from the carefully regulated 'Dome Farms' to the ecology of the lakes and forests. But the Mother Brain has developed a fault. Strange beasts are terrorising the countryside. Giant Fire Ants, Locusts, and Mosquitoes are turning Mota into a nightmare land.

Into this madness comes a hero – yours truly. Tap your name in and get role playing. The Commander of Mota

spells out the gravity of your mission. You must find the secret recording made in the Biosystems Laboratory, which it is hoped will throw some light on the malfunctioning of the Mother Brain.

The first thing you notice about this spot of Megadrive role playing is its speed of response. It fairly whizzes along. Information windows appear in a split second after pressing your keypad. The method of talking to players and implementing moves is the



standard console system of multiple windows. It is all done with the keypad by choosing between alternatives and makes for very fast and absorbing adventuring.

More than most role playing games, *Phantasy Star II* requires a lot of conversation with the characters you bump into on your travels. There are clues, plenty of advice, rumour and snippets of gossip to be picked up everywhere and the wise adventurer will store them away like nuggets of gold for future use.

Worthy of special praise is *Phantasy Star II*'s Hint Book. Over a hundred pages of full colour information – screen shots of every location, advice on combat, weapon and spell selection, and maps of all key areas. It makes the game a hell of a lot more enjoyable by doing most of the essential but laborious donkey work.

The sheer accessibility of *Phantasy Star II* will be enough to convince anyone who samples it that the Megadrive is just as good a role playing machine as it is an arcade box. These interplanetary adventures don't come cheap though. Expect to pay at least £55 for it on import

● Eugene Lacey

ESWAT

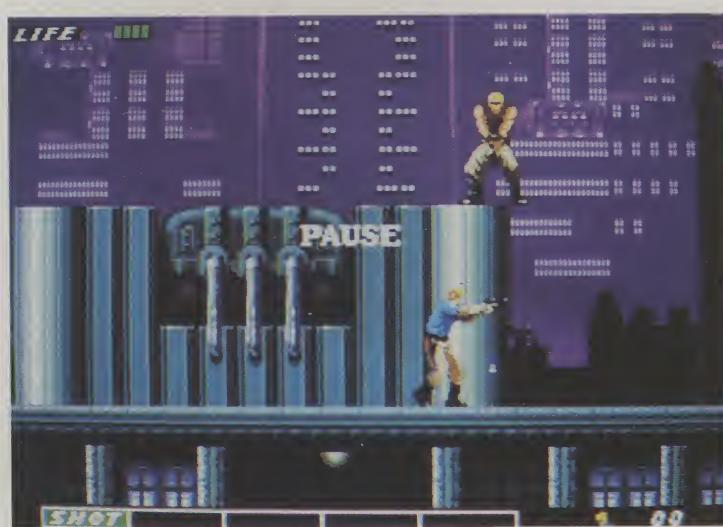
Megadrive imports turn up the heat

ESWAT stands for Enhanced Special Weapons and Tactics – a crack unit of the future police force, trained in the most advanced weapons and counter terrorism practices.

In this conversion of the popular arcade game the ESWAT division are pitted against six crime bosses and their powerful forces. Before you can join the elite ESWAT squad you must first prove yourself as an ordinary policeman doing battle with the crime syndicate troops armed with a simple hand pistol.

If you make it through this preliminary test you will be introduced to the first of the special equipment. Superbly drawn and reminiscent of Robocop, it provides greatly enhanced fire power and takes the form of an armour suit which straps on in sections. As each item is picked up, the chart at the top of the screen shows the type of equipment that has been collected and what is left to get.

As well as the armour suit the ESWAT policeman must also collect enhanced weaponry power-up icons and ammunition icons. You will need every last ounce of fire power to defeat the

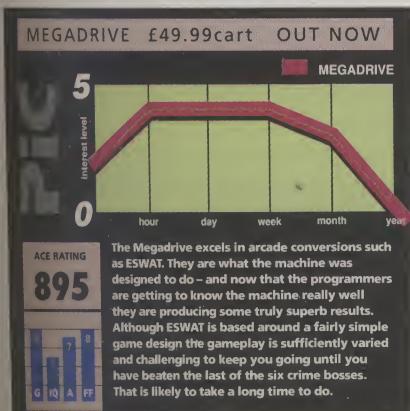


The opening level of *ESWAT* is an assault training course for would-be ESWAT members.

increasingly tough crime bosses. Each boss has a unique style of attack and requires different strategies to defeat.

ESWAT is a bang up to date arcade game and its Megadrive implementation is kissing close to the coin-op original. A summer blaster of unput-downable playability.

● Eugene Lacey



The Megadrive excels in arcade conversions such as *ESWAT*. They are what the machine was designed to do – and now that the programmers are getting to know the machine really well they are producing some truly superb results. Although *ESWAT* is based around a fairly simple game design the gameplay is sufficiently varied and challenging to keep you going until you have beaten the last of the six crime bosses. That is likely to take a long time to do.

ENTER  FIRST INTO BATTLE...LAST TO LEAVE



ATARI ST
CBM AMIGA
IBM PC &
COMPATIBLES

Set in the near future, as an alternative reality, BATTLE COMMAND is an arcade/strategy game in which the player controls a single "MAULER" Assault Tank in one of 16 scenarios (missions) in the ultra war fought between two dominant races in the NEW WORLD. The latest phase of the North/South war has been going on for over 10 years, with a stalemate eventually developing - a standoff between armies massed over a long dug-in battlefield. Such are the defensive capabilities of each side, full scale attacks are suicidal, so any offensive moves are, by necessity, small "behind the lines" actions performed by elite troops in specially designed vehicles. The Mauler is the latest such machine - capable of being lifted in and out of hostile territory by fast stealth choppers and armed with the most advanced weaponry the Northern scientists can devise.

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CDTV SWITCHES ON

With the launch only a month or two away, ACE talks CDTV software...

THE CULT OF THE SEVERED HEAD

CRL get gruesome

CRL stole a march on most software publishers by developing their EGADS utility, later rechristened DUNE. The system enables a designer to script and develop hypergame scenarios (see ACE issue 30) for CD and computer without programming skills. It works by linking mixed media files (sound, graphics, and routines) together to build a complete scenario that is then driven by clicking on 'buttons' – areas of the screen that lead one into a new sequence or effect. Combine this with the use of icons and animation sequences and, in theory, you could put together a pretty complex beast without every having to code a single byte.

CRL's first DUNE release, *Herewith the Clues*, already covered in ACE, is being converted for CDTV and is broadly similar to the original Amiga version but with enhanced graphics. *The Cult of the Severed Head*, however, is their first dedicated CDTV DUNE product.

Developed by Nicholas Gardner, the game is the first in a proposed series detailing incidents from the casebook of Nathaniel Tallantire, a fic-



A frame from the CDTV version of *Herewith the Clues* – that cuppa looks a lot better than the original Amiga version.

tionalised Reverend who is the senior exorcist in the Church of England. The story starts in 54BC when one Galatius sought to save retreating Druids from the Roman army by conjuring an evil spiritual manifestation generated by human sacrifice. The Druids aren't overwhelmed by gratitude when he succeeds in saving them and imprison the demon before killing Galatius. As magical chaps will do, however, he resurrects and teaches his tormentors a few lessons before disappearing into history.

By now the mention of severed heads and human sacrifice will have alerted the knowledge-

JAPAN WORLD

The low cost of the CDTV compared to other multimedia devices has led to it being used for a unique development in Derbyshire.

Toyota recently decided to build a £700 million car assembly plant in the county, and the local council wanted to educate the locals in matters Japanese. What better way to do it than produce a multimedia educational package...

Global Learning Systems are producing the package, called *Japan World*, and Central Television will be providing facilities and technology to help produce the software. The package will then be supplied to local institutions complete with a CDTV to run it on – the hardware will be sponsored by Commodore.

Japan World demonstrates that CDTV will indeed open up entirely new areas of application. Stand by for fireworks when the entertainment industry really get their teeth into it...

Aha! A clue! One of the objects that appears (in digitised form) in *The Cult of the Severed Head*



able to the fact that CRL are up to their old tricks. Having braved industry scorn with their earlier horror releases (Jack the Ripper, Dracula, and others), the company are now drooling at the mouth at the thought of the enhanced possibilities of CDTV. At last: 550 megabytes of blood, gore, and spine tingling suspense!

"We are breaking through old barriers with these products. We are taking computer entertainment into new, exciting territories with new ideas, new technology, and a new approach."

CRL's Michael Hodges in bullish mood

By the time you get hold of the game, the scenario will have shifted to the 1920's, where the Reverend Tallantire is summoned to Wales to investigate some 'strange disturbances'. The game is being put together using a combination of claymation, traditional computer animation, manuscripts, and diagrams. Essentially an adventure scenario, it will include clues, riddles, and detective work for the player who must unravel the secret behind the incidents.

The game will make full use of the CDTV's IR controller, boasts 4096 HAM graphic screens, text vocalisation if required, hypertext descriptions (i.e. you can click on passages for more details or developments), and stop frame claymation. In addition, up to 250 photographic images of the actual district where the action takes place will be included in the game.

It all sounds, well, rather horrible. We can't wait for the review copy!

STAND AND DELIVER!

Here's a quick run-down of the modules within *Dr Feelgood*...

PERSONAL HEALTH

- Healthy living – diet, exercise, fitness, substance abuse (including alcohol and smoking), looking after your heart, psychology
- Self examination – regular self-checkup procedures
- Adult health – personal/sexual problems
- Senior citizens – continued health
- Health test – general health test
- Dental Health – explanation and preventative medicine
- Alternative medicine – types and descriptions

FIRST AID

Basic principles, medical emergencies, major techniques, general skills

TRAVELLING ABROAD

Features 160 countries around the world, listing information about vaccinations, medications, mandatory medical requirements, climate (temperature, rainfall, humidity, sunshine – full year), suitable clothing, local hazards, emergency procedures. Additional 'before you go' advice

DIARY

Simple diary to note medical appointments, vaccination recalls, child vaccinations etc

EMERGENCY

Immediate facility to jump into any specific part of the system

DR FEELGOOD

DIGITA help you deliver...

You've just come back from work to find your girlfriend giving birth in the kitchen. Do you call a doctor? No, like the man you are you boot up *Dr Feelgood* on your CDTV, invoke the Emergency Facility, and follow the simple on-screen instructions. Ooops... sextuplets...

Seriously, however – OK, sextuplets are VERY serious – seriously, however, *Dr Feelgood* is an excellent example of CDTV development. It aims to make maximum use of the audio and visual capability of the machine while at the same time offering improved user control in an application that must surely have universal appeal.

Not strictly entertainment, we agree – although a family doctor program with sound effects would seem to have enormous entertainment possibilities – but *Dr Feelgood* gets an ACE mention because it shows how a utility application using new technology can overlap with the leisure market because of its interactive nature.

For example, apart from delivering kids, checking up on your teeth, and carrying out emergency first aid, *Dr Feelgood* also contains interactive procedures to give you advice on diet and fitness, foreign travel, and exercise. For the hypochondriac it's an essential purchase because it uses a keyword system to provide a dictionary of symptoms and conditions.

On a more serious note, the 'Emergency Facility' mentioned above enables you to jump straight into a specific area of the program if circumstances demand immediate action. There



WHAT PRICE FMV?

For most people, the real attraction of CD technology is the potential for full motion video – movies, effectively, on compact disk. Current research has shown, however, that FMV may not be as important as previously thought.

Virgin, who have extensively researched FMV previously during their involvement with the North Polar Expedition interactive video disk, have already discovered that lengthy periods of animation induce a 'couch potato' effect, whereby the user relaxes into a quiescent state, watching the 'movie' and losing interest in the interaction.

This effect has been confirmed by other developers, who are beginning to realise that the active sense of involvement users feel from an interactive scenario is different to the more passive involvement felt while watching video sequences. Virgin found that useful lengths of animation within interactive scenarios could be as little 1 to 2 seconds long, allowing sequences to be animated from RAM without the need for drawing frames from the CD.

This is just as well, because FMV may be longer in arriving than we thought. Although Philips and Sony are claiming that CD-I, due for launch next year, will be delivered with FMV capability and Commodore say they will be producing an FMV adapter for CDTV, the reality appears to be slightly different.

The difficulty has arisen for two reasons. The core of the problem is simply that most video stills generate up to 500K and need to be animated at between 18 and 30 frames a second – whereas the CD can only transfer 150K in that period. At a worst case scenario (500K stills running at the NTSC standard of 30 frames a second) that means that each screen will have to drop from around half a megabyte to just 5K!

There are two possible solutions to this. The first is a hardware solution: design a decompression/compression chip set that will do the job for you and can be built into all the machines. Unfortunately, this requires an exact standard to be defined otherwise different machines will end up demanding incompatible file formats. The Motion Picture Expert Group (MPEG) is currently getting together to define a Digital Video Standard, but the specs aren't likely to be published until later in 1991 and then it will take a couple of years for chipsets to be (a) designed and (b) produced cheaply enough to be useful. A current hardware solution, DVI from Intel, costs \$2000 for the chip set alone – you still need your CD system to go with it.

The second possible solution is to do the whole thing in software. Previously this was reckoned to be impossible, but there have been enormous advances in recent months in compression technology and it is conceivable that software might ultimately provide the answer.

With so many people chasing the solution to FMV along different paths, expect to wait at least five years before FMV CD systems become widely available.



Digita's user interface mixes text, graphics, animation, narration, music, and – gulp! – sound effects

are five main areas within the system: personal health, first aid, travelling abroad, obstetrics/infant growth, and a simple diary.

Developed over 2.5 man years, Digital claim that 'enormous research and design has gone into a specific user interface so that the program can be effectively controlled using the hand-held CDTV remote control.' Our only reservation so far is that it doesn't seem to provide a full-scale surgical instruction module. Ah well, guess we'll have to continue to make do with *Life and Death*. More clinical details next month...

A THOUSAND WAYS TO DIE...



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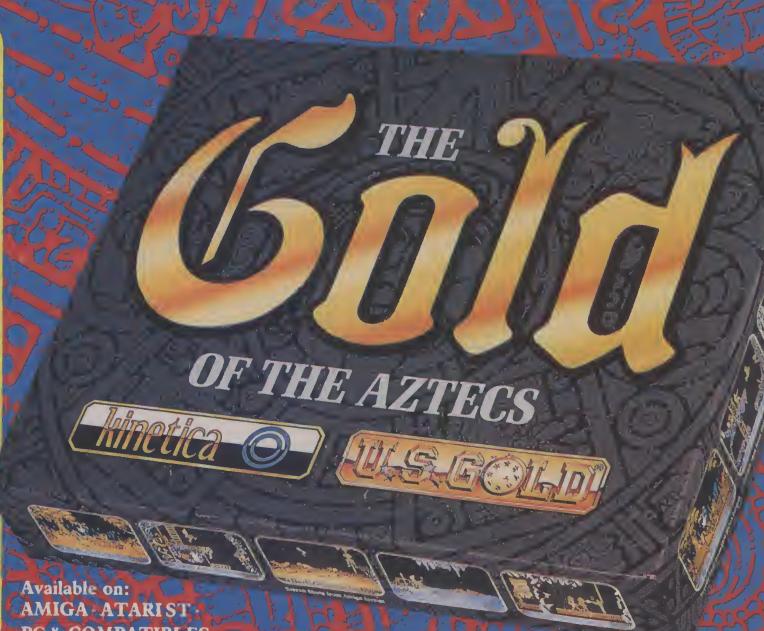
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(See inside box for details.)

Screen shots are only intended to be illustrative of the game play and not the screen graphics which vary considerably between different formats in quality and appearance and are subject to the computers specifications.

Cadaver™



Deep in the heart of darkness lies a swamp. In the centre of the swamp there stands a castle. And deep inside the castle the Necromancer waits.

His history is steeped in blood: A feud between the kingdom's heirs, a battle won by magic and a massacre that stained the battlements red with blood. In the aftermath many adventurers tried to unravel the enigma. None returned alive.

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Screen Shots from Atari ST version

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8
9
+
10
up

ACE sees how some recent hits have fared as new 8 and 16 bit versions

SPECTRUM

ESCAPE FROM THE PLANET OF ROBOT MONSTERS

Domark/Tengen £9.99 £12.99; Atari ST version reviewed Issue 32; ACE rating 880

EFPRM has finally arrived for the Spectrum, having already been reviewed for all the other major formats. Escaping from the robot-infested planet, you have several tasks to perform along the way, these forming several subplots to the game. These subplots include freeing human prisoners (who are slaving away in the factories that you travel through), fighting the robots, and on every third level using your collected bombs to kill an evil reptilian.

Something that is lacking in these 8-bit versions is the inclusion of the space mobile maze, which gives a good variety to the 16-bit versions of the game. The graphics are in a tasteful shade of pink and black and the sound is reasonable. The game plays in a similar style to the other versions and almost manages to retain the pace and atmosphere, but the result is definitely a less addictive experience.

SPECTRUM RATING: 700



Escape / Spectrum

KLAX
Domark; £9.99; £12.99; ST Version Reviewed Issue 32; ACE rating 895

Practically everybody in the world must have played Tetris, and now a new game in the same genre has arrived for the Spectrum. In this game you have to arrange the blocks that you catch on your 'paddle' and then build them up in groups of three of the same colour. These groups of three blocks (Klaxes) can be horizontal, vertical or diagonal.

When you are asked to collect 3 horizontal Klaxes in the third round you will find this a very difficult challenge. But once you pass this level you will be able to cope with most of the other challenges you are faced with in the game. The colours of the Klaxes can however become almost indistinguishable when the blocks are coming at you at speed, which is infuriating at times. As in Tetris, simplicity rules OK.

SPECTRUM RATING: 820



Escape / Spectrum

AMSTRAD

E-MOTION

U.S. Gold; 14.99 10.99; Amiga Version Reviewed Issue 32; ACE Rating 890

An original product involving balls and bars. This game has you in control of a sphere with a triangle in the middle of it which you use to manoeuvre about the screen, colliding with other balls. The objective is to make other balls of the same colours crash into each other. They then disappear. To complicate things bars are placed on the screen to send the on-screen balls flying across the screen when they hit each other. The bars can also trap balls of different colours. When two balls of different colours collide then a small ball of another colour is produced. If you collect this quick enough then it will act as an energy pod, colliding with which will boost your energy levels. Leave it too long, however, and the new ball will become a pulsating sphere which will explode – the same applies to all of the other balls if not cancelled out by one of the same colour. The only difference with the Amstrad version is that it has no coloured background and is not ray-traced. Yet another addictive game based on a simple idea and destined to be a hit.



E-motion / Amstrad

AMSTRAD RATING: 837

COMMODORE 64

PIPE MANIA
Entertainment; £9.95cs £14.95dk; Amiga Version Reviewed Issue 31; ACE Rating 910

In this popular puzzler, you are a plumber and must place lengths of different shaped piping so the 'Flooz' keeps flowing for as long as possible. To complicate matters objects are scattered around the screen to block off your ideal route. Also the piping pieces are given to you in a set order, so you need to be quick thinking to optimise the use of each one. To get over the obvious problems caused by this you can place a piece of piping over another piece.

This is called 'Bombing', but it takes longer than placing a piece on an empty space and time is of the essence because the Flooz is flowing. Dumping pieces by placing them anywhere on the screen doesn't help either, because at the end any extra pieces are counted up and points are deducted from your score. As you get further into the game you will find it very challenging, but as you progress through levels you will be given a password so that you don't have to go all the way back to the beginning each time you lose at a high level. Not a difficult game to convert downwards, and a highly addictive scenario.

C64 RATING 910

FOOTBALLER OF THE YEAR
Gremlin; £9.99cs £14.99dk; Atari ST Version Reviewed Issue 31; ACE Rating 670

The World Cup has passed and still football games are hitting the shelf. This game has you playing in a host of national and international matches. In this version, however, the actual games take place in an area only slightly larger than the goal area – very restricting at times, so the whole game effectively revolves around shooting at goals.

To improve your score you can buy goalcards if you

follow a set plan. Also you can play trivia games to increase your bank balance. Then at the end of the season if you've scored the most goals you become the Footballer Of The Year.

The graphics are scarcely worth a mention with stick men for footballers. The sound hardly exists during the game and what there is is poor. Despite all this, the game is actually quite enjoyable at first, but after a few goes you get tired of the small playing area and look for something else.

C64 RATING 580

ATARI ST

THUNDERSTRIKE

Millennium; £24.99; PC Version Reviewed Issue 35; ACE Rating 885; ACE Graphics Award

The first thing that strikes you about this futuristic flight and flight game is its speed. Compared to a flight sim such as F19 or F16 where the scenery scrolls at a fairly reasonable pace, in *Thunderstrike* your ship, with added turbo boosters, positively scorches across the screen. Even better are the amazing solid 3D graphics and the ship's responsive handling, only let down by the sound department.

You are appearing for a TV show where you have to defend your home base from a whole host of enemy robotic craft. Certain ships leave behind energy pods, turbo boosters and shield enhancers when destroyed, which you can collect by simply flying over them. As it's a TV show the better you perform and the more dramatic your performance is determines marks what type of ship you get in the next round.

One of the main pluses of the game is that the game is very easy to play and get into (unlike many flight sims) and this certainly helps the addiction level. A slick, sophisticated shoot-em-up.

ST RATING 885



Thunderstrike / Atari ST



Infestation / Atari ST

There are a large number of floors and rooms to be explored so *Infestation* will be kept off your shelf for quite a reasonable amount of time. The graphics are adequate but without pushing the computer's capabilities. Tough at first but the map and the playability soon grow on you.

ST Rating: 720

Thunderstrike / Amiga

AMIGA

THUNDERSTRIKE

Millenium; £24.99; PC Version Reviewed Issue 35; ACE rating 885, ACE Graphics Award

See the ST review for game details. There are few differences between the two versions, but the Amiga does have better sound (as expected!). Definitely one to consider.

AMIGA RATING 885

Midwinter / PC



INFESTATION

Psygnosis; £24.99; Amiga Version Reviewed Issue 32; ACE Rating 720

You have been placed on the planet Xelos and MUST rid the space station Alpha 2 of its alien invaders. To do this you have to close in each of the alien eggs and poison them with your cyanide gas. Also you have to destroy the alien droids and the mother alien.

To achieve this task you have to manoeuvre around the planet and the space station either by foot or by the MMU (Manned Manoeuvre Unit). There is a wide range of objects to be found and identified – for example, you have to identify lifts and computers and other items otherwise you will get nowhere in the game. Once you have worked out the basics, you'll find that this is as much a game of exploration as it is of shooting aliens and destroying eggs.

There are a large number of floors and rooms to be explored so *Infestation* will be kept off your shelf for quite a reasonable amount of time. The graphics are adequate but without pushing the computer's capabilities. Tough at first but the map and the playability soon grow on you.

ST Rating: 720

PC

MIDWINTER

Rainbird; £34.99; Atari ST Version Reviewed Issue 32; ACE Rating 948

The PC version of this solid vector 3D exploration, strategy, and action game is virtually indistinguishable from the other 16-bit versions and plays every bit as well. You must recruit allies to help you fight off an invasion that threatens your livelihood on a frozen continent during a future ice age. The challenge is enormous and involves mastering skiing, using snow buggies, sniping at the opposition, and balancing resources and personnel. A big game that deserves consideration by every PC owner.

PC RATING 948

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